washington college review

a liberal arts journal

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Washington College Review

A Liberal Arts Journal

Volume XIV

2006

Chestertown, Maryland

Cover Illustration: Evil and My Friend by Brian Cornelius '06
Digital Print

Washington College
300 Washington Avenue
Chestertown, MD 21620

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The *Washington College Review* is a liberal arts journal that seeks to recognize the best of undergraduate student writing from all disciplines of the College and to publish work deserving of wider availability to readers in the College community and beyond.

The *Washington College Review* is published annually by the Rose O'Neill Literary House Press.

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A Word from the Editor

When one lives and works in an academic setting, it is somewhat difficult to *avoid* learning things. Every day brings another tidbit of knowledge, gleaned from talking with a student in class, overheard in the library (or the gym!) or discussed with colleagues at the lunch table. One never knows where the next clever, insightful or profound snippet might come from. The environment is educationally ripe; it is palpable in all corners of the campus.

In reading for this issue of the *Review*, I learned a great deal of things. And I know that I was not the only one. My fellow editors and I commented to each other via email and in the editorial meetings that, with each submission picked up, something new was discovered. In addition, the pieces were radically different from those that were offered last year. Not better or worse, just different.

I learned that a poem can be simultaneously simple and complex, as revealed in the poetry of Erin K. O'Hare. I also learned that memory and image are of great significance to the poets on campus—poets like Cindy Brown, Will Bruce and Celeste Stanley. I learned how to conduct a deeper reading of familiar texts such as *The Canterbury Tales* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, taking that which was once known and suddenly making it as new as when it was first read twenty years ago. I learned about the remarkable lives of two individuals in two very different fields, thanks to the insights of Cynthia Orndorf and Kathryn Belmonte. I am still ruminating on the cultural contributions of Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston because of Carrie Chapter's diligent research. I learned the value of language and the wonder of play through the artistic eyes of our campus photographers and visual artists. And I learned more than I ever thought possible about myself through the essays of Lexi Paza and Sarah McCloskey.

I think all of this is grand. And necessary. For, in order to succeed in a world that is ever-tilting, our students need to look at things in a way that is radically unique. They need to come to the table prepared to dive in head-first, adjust their viewing lens and reassert the old as

new – and vice versa. I love how our students actively pursue this day in and day out, as reflected in the essays, poems and images contained in this issue. For those of us doing the professing, we also have to open ourselves up to this notion. We have to expect to be taught just as much as we expect to teach, if not more. I don't know about you, but I think the academy works much better if the learning goes both ways.

I would be lost and ignorant without the wisdom of my fellow editors – Erin Anderson, Hugh Jarrard, Anne Massoni, Corey Olsen, Leslie Sherman and Kathy Wagner – and would not know which end was up were it not for Meredith Davies Hadaway, Diane Landskroener and Marcia Landskroener. And nothing would have gotten done without the talent and vision of our student editor Lindsay Bergman. Special thanks are warranted for Benjamin Anastas, who, in his short time at WC, made an indeliable mark on the campus. I must also thank both the Wednesday night meeting group and the Drama Department for support and stress-relief.

As you read this issue, I urge you to open your mind and heart to both the old and new. Come on, everybody's doing it.

Michele Volansky
September 11, 2006
Chestertown, MD

A Merry Threat

Humor and the Supernatural in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"

LIAM DALEY

At the end of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, we are left with a number of unanswered questions. Despite his very long explanation, the Green Knight's precise intentions and even his true identity remain open to speculation. This, in and of itself, should not be particularly surprising. Gawain's encounter has been with the faeries, after all, and faeries elude easy explanation by their very nature. It should be expected, therefore, that even a thorough account of their behavior contains certain cloudy or mysterious elements. At the end, we still have no solid idea of the Green Knight's identity, more specifically than the Baron of Huatdesert. Is he a faerie, himself, or simply a human working in allegiance with faeries? Furthermore, what are his intentions towards Arthur's court, and are they necessarily the same as his compatriots?

The first question concerns, for lack of a better word, the race of the Green Knight. While we can never be absolutely certain about his heritage, it seems fairly unlikely that the Green Knight is human. For the members of Arthur's court there is little doubt. It is established upon his entry that "fantoum and fayryye the folk there it demed."[1]* Later, they lament that Gawain will be "Hadet with an alvisch mon, for angardes pryde."[2] As such, the Green Knight's potential humanity, while technically possible, is never established with any certainty, nor is

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* All translations taken from "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," ed J.J. Anderson, Everyman, London, 1997.

it ever discussed once all is revealed at the end. Indeed, he receives no reference, either in dialogue or narration, to suggest that he is anything other than a faerie. At the very least, we may suppose that he is of mixed race, as presumably is Arthur's half-sister, Morgan le Fay. But regardless of the genetic particulars of the matter, we are clearly invited to assume that he is a member of "the Folk."

What then, does it mean to be a faerie, since there are many obvious differences, between human life and faerie life. Most obviously, perhaps, are the facts that faeries can use magic and are not affected by death in quite the same way as humans. However, while obvious to reader, these differences are not necessarily obvious to the other characters, as Gawain was not aware of these traits during his stay at the castle. The most marked difference between the humans and the faeries seems to be, of all things, their sense of humor.

The level of mirth that Gawain encounters in the court of the Green Knight is almost unprecedented. The occupants laugh at practically everything, even the most mundane chores and drudgery. We see this when the servants attend on Gawain after his arrival: "Ther he was disployed, with speeches of mirth / the burn of his bruny and of his bright wedes."[3] For them, even the most basic, menial tasks are sources of mirth. This behavior however, is not simply reflective of a jolly outlook on life. The sense of humor is also highly shrewd, and based largely on non sequiturs and irony. Indeed, most of the time, when the inhabitants of the castle laugh, the situation is not particularly funny. For example, as they set an array of rich food in front of the clearly famished Gawain, they remark:

> Ful hendely, quen alle the hatheles rehayted hym at ones
> as hende:
> 'This penaunce now ye take;
> And eft hit shall amende.'[4]

That is to say, they jocularly informed the famished knight that abstaining from dinner would be a fine penance, and he would be the far better for it. And then they laugh. What this penance is for, precisely,

they do not say. In once sense, their joke foreshadows Gawain's self-depricating attitude at the end of the poem, and the faeries' ultimate disagreement of his overly-critical (as they feel) opinion of himself. At the moment, however, the remark amounts to a jocular little bit of anti-logic. We can appreciate the irony of the gesture, although the timing may seem a little odd, under the circumstances. And while the tone of the passage prevents us from interpreting any overtly cruel or sadistic intentions, there is still something vaguely unsettling about showing a hungry man food, and then pretending to make him wait.

This sense of humor creeps into every aspect of their behavior. Even the wife of Green Knight uses it for the purposes of seduction. And in so doing, her tone does not seem particularly seductive or flirtatious at all. Most often, her responses are sarcastic, or even downright bizarre. For instance, when she and Gawain first kiss, she initiates the process through mockery, almost goading him into it:

> Then ho gef hym good day, and with a glent laghed
> And as ho stod ho stonyed hym with ful stor wordes:
> 'Now he that spedes uche speech this disport yelde yow!
> Bot that ye be Gaain, hit gos not in mydne.'
> 'Querfore?' quoth the freke, and freschly he askes,
> Ferde lest he hade fayled in fourme oif his castes.
> Bot the burde hym blessed, and bi this skyl sayde:
> 'So god as Gawain gaynly is halden,
> And courtaysye is closed so clen in hymselven,
> Cought not lightly haf lenged so long with a lady
> Bot he had craved a cosse, bi his courtaysye
> Bi sum towch of summe trifle a sum tales ende.' [5]

Her first step is to call him an imposter. Gawain at first is shocked. He does not catch her joke, and assumes the sternness in her voice is authentic. He does not understand this variety of humor, and as such, the wife's joke only provokes and alarms him. Of course, once she explains herself, stating that the real Sir Gawain would have contrived some clever means to kiss her by that point, he sees that she is merely

teasing. But rather than share her amusement he is quick to criticize himself. This again, foreshadows his reaction later on when the Green Knight reveals the hidden test.

Even then, at the climactic moment of impending decapitation, there is humor. The Green Knight feints twice before actually striking the blow. Clearly this is not simply calculated for humor, but symbolic of Gawain's first two successful days in the castle. However, the Green Knight characterizes it in the most whimsical of terms. "First I mansed the muryly with a mint one."[6] To paraphrase, he only threatened him merrily at first, as joke or a prank. But Gawain feels any way but "muryly," about the threat of decapitation. Indeed, just the opposite. Gawain was "So agreved for greme he gryed withinne. / Alle the blode of his brest blende in his face."[7] Rather than amusement, Gawain's reaction is one of horror and bewilderment, but the differences between their responses can be easily explained. If not strictly immortal, the faeries are clearly less susceptible to fatal injury. And because they do not view death in the same way as humans, the Green Knight's idea of a joke amounts to a moment of mortal peril for the terrified Gawain.

This style of humor, which proves so largely inaccessible to the humans, supplies an explanation for the entire episode. The faerie's are not innately evil, nor are they innately good. They do not intend the destruction of Arthur's court, nor do they necessarily intend to glorify it. Rather, they have created an engaging, entertaining challenge for no apparent reason other than their own diversion. What proved an amusing experiment for the Green Knight, shatters Gawain's entire perception of himself and his worth as a knight. This demonstrates that those things which humans hold most significant, and use to define the entire nature of their lives, are considered highly trivial and unimportant to the older race.

And so, because of their distinctive circumstances and unique outlook on life, the faeries have a somewhat weak grasp of the human condition. Therefore it is difficult to discern their precise intentions in this matter. On the whole, however, it would seem that the Green Knight's intentions are separate from Morgan's.

We know that Morgan le Fay is a bitter enemy of Queen Guinevere and the Green Knight tells us that the entire episode was simply a way for Morgan to terrify her, hopefully to death. "Ho wayned me me this wonder your wyttes to reve / For to have greved Gaynour and gart hir to dyye."[8] Certainly, the challenge was terrifying, and there was a fairly overt element of theatricality to it. And in fact, we are told that many of Arthur's subjects react in horror, as we might expect: "Moni of hym had doubt."[9] However, oddly enough, there is no mention in the poem of Guinevere's reaction in particular. Besides, this explanation is hardly satisfactory. The Green Knight has invested far too much energy and thought for the entire scheme to simply be a malicious practical joke on the Queen.

We must conclude that Morgan established the stunt as a way to thwart and humiliate Arthur's court. The Green Knight agreed to participate but with very different intentions. He himself seems to have only the utmost admiration for the court, as is evident from his reaction to Gawain's arrival. He was confident that one of Arthur's knights would pass the test and the whole thing would end reasonably well.

Under the terms established at the beginning, the Green Knight would have been perfectly entitled to decapitate Gawain at the end. But the Green Knight adds his own set of terms, in secret, to decide whether he actually should or not. Certainly if the terms were played out exactly as stated, Morgan would have won either way. If no one accepted the challenge, or if the knight who accepted it did not arrive in a year as promised, the court would be disgraced. If the knight did honor the challenge, then he would be killed. Given that, Morgan may have arrived at this idea from a number of different directions. Either it was a purely malicious scheme, motivated by hatred and desire to cause destruction, or simply her idea of a nasty little stunt. She dispises Arthur and his court, and so she throws them this amusing little problem. Clearly, if she wanted to simply wreak destruction, and potentially dispose of Guinevere in the meantime, she could have with ease. But this way she gains the pleasure of seeing them squirm a little bit. Mean-spirited? Yes, but a mean-spirited *joke*. The fun, in large part, lies in waiting to see

what Gawain would do. Does this make sense to us? No, not especially. Why not? Because they're faeries and their entire outlook on life is drastically different from ours.

Morgan introduces the challenge, via the Green Knight, as a cruel prank. The Green Knight participates but adds his own terms once Gawain has arrived at the castle to make things more sporting. However, the concept remains in the same basic arena of enjoyment. Regardless of their differences in intent and tone, Morgan and the Green Knight basically arrive at the same place. However, this amusing joke is not only potentially lethal, but has ego-shattering ramifications when applied to human beings. The entire incident illustrates the discrepancies between the human and faerie outlook on existence.

Notes

1. Line 240, The people there took it for illusion and magic [or literally, simply, "phantom and faerie"].
2. Line 681, "Beheaded by an elf-man for the sake of overweening pride."
3. Lines 860-61, "There he was relieved, with speeches of mirth / the coat of mail and his bright clothes."
4. Lines 895-98, "Most courteously, when all the men together rallied (i.e. teasingly encouraged) him politely: 'You are taking this penance now, and later it will improve.'"
5. Lines 1290 – 1301, "Now he who prospers every speech (God) reward you for this entertainment! But that you are Sir Gawain goes not in my mind (is hard to believe)." "Why" he said, and eagerly asks, afraid that he had failed in the etiquette of his behavior. But the lady wished him well and gave him this as the reason: "A man as good as Gawain is rightly to be held, and one in whom courtesy is so completely embodied, might not easily have stayed so long without craving a kiss, through his courtesy, by some touch of light speech at the end of his conversation."
6. Line 2345, "First I threatened you in sport with a feinted blow only."
7. Lines 2370-71, "So overcome with mortification that he shuddered inwardly, all he blood of his brest burned in his face."
8. Line 2459-60, "She sent this marvel (i.e. as the Greek Knight) to deprive you of your senses, and to have frightened Guinevere and caused her to die."
9. Line 441, "Many a one had fear."

The Look of Virtue

Clothing and Appearance in The Canterbury Tales

AFTON WOODWARD

Satirists like Swift, Pope, and even the post-modernist Vonnegut have Geoffrey Chaucer to thank for his relatively modern, subtle but biting criticisms of society. In *The Canterbury Tales*, everything gets a sly poke: the Church of England, courtly love, not-so-courtly love, carpenters, anti-Semitism, and rich old friars. Chaucer uses every social issue he can to his advantage in *The Canterbury Tales*, and the storytellers and their various social inclinations are often characterized by a raise of Chaucer's eyebrow. One particular issue is outward appearance, the extravagance of which was of course officially frowned upon by the Church of Chaucer's day. Many of the characters are excessively preoccupied with how they look, while others conspicuously are not. If Chaucer utilized nice clothing or the lack thereof as the direct outward manifestations of a character's true morality and virtue, however, he would not be the clever craftsman now celebrated on stage by the Royal Shakespeare Company. No, his techniques in relating the quality of certain characters to the way they regard dress and outward appearance is subtle and, to the unconditioned eye, easy to generalize or overlook. A detailed comparison of characters and their tales, however, shows that Chaucer has a more precise and logical approach to appearance.

In the General Prologue, Chaucer immediately brings our attention to the effects of appearance as related to materialism. Several ecclesiastical figures on the pilgrimage have expensive clothing and own nice things: "ful fetys was hir [the Prioress's] cloke"[1]; the Monk has sleeves that are

"purfiled at the hond / of grys, and that the fyneste of a lond"[2]; and even the Friar, whose chief job it is to help the poor, has expensive clothing—"of double worstede was his semycope.[3] Considering these people have supposedly taken vows of poverty, the very existence of these possessions is a strong indication of corruption. It is immediately clear that the way these figures present themselves in appearance has no resemblance to the substance of their character; clothing, in a word, does not make the man. Chaucer makes no direct commentary about these figures, but they are a conspicuous introduction to the concept of appearance, as well as to the close relationship of dress to wealth and social status, which he goes on to explore in greater depth.

Clothing becomes a major issue in Chaucer's description of the Wife of Bath, of whom he says, "Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt / She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt."[4] The Wife of Bath is in the business of ensuring that others dress well, and she is rich due to her success, the textile industry being considerably lucrative at the time. Her own clothes are impressive, and the narrator goes on about them at excessive length:

> Her coverchiefs ful fine weren of ground;
> I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
> That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
> Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
> Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.[5]

He goes on, "Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat / As brood as is a bokeler or a targe; / A foot-mantel about hir hipes large, / And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe."[6] Such description may indicate the narrator's own apparent fixation with dress, but it speaks of the Wife of Bath as well. She is financially dependent on the clothing industry, and her own appearance makes her own infatuation with clothing obvious. And not only does she participate in the notion that appearance is important, but she actively encourages it by selling clothing to others. In an interesting parallel, the Wife shows this same trend in promoting female stereotypes. Not only does she embody their qualities like

drunkenness and promiscuity, but she boasts about her immorality, encouraging others to act as she does. Appearance, to the Wife, seems to be *more* important than real virtue. Again, Chaucer does not explicitly comment on the Wife's character, but we gain a clear idea of how to view her and her rather ineffectual values.

The Wife of Bath, in her Prologue, brings up clothing in her tirade against her husbands. She tells them,

> Thou seyst also that if we make us gay
> With clothing, and with precious array,
> That it is peril of oure chastitee
> And yet—with sorwe!—thou most enforce thee,
> And seye thise wordes in the Apostles name:
> "In habit maad with chastitee and shame
> Ye wommen shul apparaille yow," quod he,
> "And noght in tressed heer and gay perree,
> As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche."[7]

St. Paul, she says, denounces fancy dress as leading to sexual immorality. However, instead of arguing against this case logically, the Wife simply refuses to abide by it—"I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat," she says.[8] Her behavior would disprove any of her arguments against it anyway because she is an example of exactly the kind of woman who dresses well and exhibits not the vaguest hint of chastity. It seems she actually proves St. Paul right: if there is a connection between dressing well and moral failure, the Wife of Bath is its absolute epitome.

For a moment in her tale, however, there appears to be a surprising reversal of the Wife's values. Her knight complains that his new wife is "so loothly, and so oold also,"[9] and the old woman then proceeds to lecture him about the nature of appearance, social status, and true virtue, even using clothing imagery:

> Whoso that halt hym payd of his poverte,
> I holde hym riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.
> He that coveiteth is a povre wight,

For he wolde han that is nat in his myght;
But he that noght hath, ne coveiteth have,
Is riche, although ye holde hym but a knave.[10]

The surprising part is that the knight seems to takes her seriously and learns his lesson, and they end up living "In parfit joye."[11]

But despite the knight's (and the Wife's) apparent change of heart, the issue is not completely resolved. There is a clear discrepancy between the moral lesson of the story and the Wife's own lifestyle, and her own take on her story has to do with the submission of men: "Jhesu Crist us sende / Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fressh abedde."[12] She misses the meaning of her own story by the widest possible margin, and there is still a lingering question of the relationship between appearance and the nature of true virtue. The knight changes his opinion about his wife rather too quickly for comfort—he calls her "My lady and my love, and wyf so deere"[13] after her sermon, when moments before he thought of her, "My love?...nay, my dampnacioun!"[14] As readers, we really don't blame the knight for such an initial reaction to an ugly woman—in fact, we laugh at it. Therefore, such a sudden fundamental change in him is, at the least, slightly suspicious. Mere words do not change the fact that she is a hideous old woman. Most significantly, despite her argument that looks do not matter, the knight's fairy wife does in fact change into a beautiful woman to please him. Perhaps we, as well as the knight, would not think it to be such a happy ending if she remained a hag. Chaucer is making a clever point about the values of his audience as well as the knight—why does she have to become beautiful to satisfy him? If appearance did not matter at all, why should we, or the knight, care if she's ugly?

The Clerk's tale follows the Wife's story and responds to it in many ways. As we know from the General Prologue, the Clerk is not well dressed: "Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy, / For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice, / Ne was so wordly for to have office."[15] The Clerk is poor and unemployed, but it does not seem to bother him much, as the narrator continues, "For hym was levere have at his beddes heed / Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed, / Of Aristotle and his philosophie

/ Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie."[16] The Clerk prefers his "thredbare" clothes over "robes riche" as long as he can continue reading philosophy. Especially compared to the other ecclesiastical pilgrims, he appears to be a pious servant of the church—more pious than the previous figures, anyway—who takes his intellectual pursuits seriously. We are thus more likely to believe the Clerk when he talks about virtue than we are other characters more focused on worldly things, like the Monk, whose very sleeves are "the fyneste of a lond."

Because of his own social status, it is fitting that the Clerk tells the story of a peasant woman. Griselda is very poor, and though her father is, of the peasants, "povrest of hem alle,"[17] Griselda exhibits the qualities of someone who is truly virtuous. The Clerk says this is actually because of her social status: "For povreliche yfostred up was she, / No likerous lust was thurgh hire herte yronne...for she wolde vertu please, She knew wel labour but noon ydel ese."[18] Griselda's actions prove this description. Even Walter, to his credit, does seem to follow what the Wife of Bath's knight learns and claims not to care about social status—he says, "Bountee comth al of God, nat of the streen / Of which they been engendred and ybore."[19] In marrying a peasant woman, Walter shows admirable nobility of his own and a willingness to accept the lessons of the Wife of Bath's tale, even when the Wife herself does not understand them.

However, Walter shows that he does not truly understand, as he professes, the irrelevance of social status and material goods. He is so eager to take Griselda into his world of wealthy aristocracy that "for that no thing of hir olde geere / She sholde brynge into his hous, he bad / That wommen sholde dispoillen hire right theere."[20] Though he seems to appreciate Griselda's innate goodness, he shows a great disdain for the accoutrements of poverty, as do the women undressing her, who "were nat right glad / To handle hir clothes, whereinne she was clad."[21] It seems Walter thinks he is doing Griselda a great favor by taking her away from her old life, even at the expense of her inevitable embarrassment of having her strip for a crowd of people. Also, his last, and to him his most extreme, test is to take away the material things

he has given to her and to send her back to live in poverty. He grants her "the smok...that thou hast on thy bak"[22] and nothing else. This is his final test of her patience: to strip her, literally, of wealth and nice clothing. If he truly believed the rich were no better off than the poor, this would not be a valid test; rather, he would have long since stripped himself of his own lavish clothing. Walter places more emphasis on wealth and appearance than he claims to, and his taking away things like clothing makes him seem even more unnecessarily cruel.

However, because Griselda is inherently virtuous, she "ne shewed she that hire was doon offence" after being cast out by her husband.[23] She knows that clothing is no indication of one's true character, and, in this sense, the Clerk presents her as a good example. However, Griselda, for all her good qualities, acknowledges, as Walter does, that poverty is deferential to wealth. She thanks him for his grace: "That ye so longe of youre benignitee / Han holden me in honour and nobleye, / Where as I was noght worthy for to bee, / That thonke I God and yow," she says.[24] Griselda's seemingly pathetic submission to her husband makes us as uncomfortable as Walter's demands of her do. Later, her willingness to scrub Walter's house while appearing so shabbily undressed herself is downright painful: "Righ noght was she abayst of hire clothyng, / Thogh it were rude and somdeel eek torent."[25] Even Griselda's father, the poorest peasant in town, is reluctant to cover her "with hire olde coote...for rude was the clooth, and moore of age / By dayes fele than at hire mariage" because it pains him.[26] In his tale, the Clerk presents the Wife of Bath's antithesis, someone who cares nothing for clothes and is the epitome of virtue, but Griselda is just as difficult a character to comprehend as the Wife is.

The Clerk, after his tale, admits that Griselda is an exaggerated figure—if any man tries to find a woman like her, "in certein he shal faille," the Clerk says, because the story is really about how man should act towards God.[27] But taken at face value, the story is unsettling: Walter is, of course, not God, and a wife submitting herself thusly makes women from all periods in history cringe. The Clerk then pulls a strange maneuver: he switches to arguing the opposite side of the issue.

Among other things women should do, he says, "If thou be fair, ther folk been in presence, / Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparaille."[28] After such a tale, this endorsement of strong women sounds appealing in some ways, but we are at least as wary of the Clerk's sudden reversal of values as we are of the Wife of Bath's knight. Such a device is much like that of Andreas Capellanus's reversal technique in the third book of his medieval *Art of Courtly Love*, and its effect is similar. Chaucer makes the reader uncomfortable with both sides of the argument because of their respective extremities. However, the Clerk skillfully does two things: one, he uses this final argument to emphasize how absurd the Wife's is, and two, he mocks her by consciously missing the point of his *own* story. But as an opposite extreme, we are still not completely comfortable with the Clerk's tale. Judging from our own reactions to Griselda's exile and consistent disregard of appearance, it seems that it is very difficult to believe in the irrelevance of material goods.

Both sides of the issue have their valid arguments, but it is because neither side is completely satisfying that Chaucer makes his point. It does not seem true that outward appearance is as important as inherent virtue, as we learn in sermon form in the Wife of Bath's tale and through the Wife of Bath herself. But it also does not seem true that we should reject our natural tendencies to dress well and be attractive; we understand the Wife of Bath's knight's disgust for the old hag, and it is genuinely disheartening to see Griselda running around in her undergarments. Thus, it seems we are meant to find the most comfort in the middle ground. First, we should not value appearance too much because it is a gift of Fortune that has no connection to man's relationship with God. But secondly, just as dressing well does not necessarily indicate the degree to which someone is virtuous, the converse is true as well—dressing in rags and striving to be ugly would not indicate such a thing either. As we learn from Griselda's own attitude, it is people and not clothing that possess virtue, so even wearing expensive clothes is not necessarily sinful as long as one realizes that virtue is more important. Thus, the real issue is not *how* one dresses, but rather the *value* one places on appearance. In this case, even St. Paul's

argument is not precise enough—it is not dressing nicely that leads to immorality, but rather *caring* too much about appearance, as we learn from the Wife of Bath.

It does seem that because we as readers do pity the Wife of Bath's knight and Griselda, there is something in our nature that compels us to look good and to surround ourselves with other people who look (almost) as good. This is why dressing in rags is not the answer: we simply could not bear it. Clothing has been an ingrained symbol of social status for the majority of human history, and it is unlikely this will ever change. Does this mean that there is a contradiction between Christian morality and human nature? Chaucer's answer is that the need to look pretty is acceptable and even expected, as long as we do not forget virtue—and God—in the process. As one who realizes that there are no easy answers, Chaucer does not proclaim to have a definite place to draw the line, but he is successful, as a true satirist, in pointing out the absurdities in the extremes.

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Great Grandfather Clock

The ticking slowly came to a halt. August, 1982.
Eye of the Tiger was the number one hit.
I remember sitting on my father's lap
in our wood paneled living room
watching the record spin round
while the pendulum of the clock
swung out of time
the day he forgot to wind it.

What a memory to have now with you
on the couch next to me, holding my hand.
What a memory to think of my great-grandfather,
his new bride—a new land, a new life
awaiting them. How they danced and sparkled
with the sun that moved around the clock's face
until it was night and the light disappeared.

Just as you lean in to kiss me,
my aging father in his slippered feet
enters the room and says,
Don't mind me, I just came to wind the clock.

that had stopped years ago.

CINDY BROWN

Untitled from "Kansas Series"
HEATHER HOLIDAY

GELATIN SILVER PRINT

Average? Hardly the Norm!

The Plight of Women with Average-Sized Bodies in the United States

ALEXIS M. PAZA

Women with average-sized bodies in the United States of America face a peculiar situation: despite being average, these women are anything but the norm. Statistically speaking, "average" is considered being within one standard deviation of the mean on a normal curve; in numerical terms, "average" is comprised of the middle sixty-eight percent of any given population. Today, the average body of an American woman weighs approximately 140 to 145 pounds and is roughly 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 5 inches tall (although these numbers differ to some extent depending on the source). Considering the implications of the word "standard," the vast majority of women's bodies in the United States should be somewhere near 140 pounds and 5 foot 4 inches. However, a glance at the cover of any fashion magazine loudly suggests an enormous discrepancy between an average-sized woman's body and the ideal female body *marketed* as "average" to the American public. The ideal female body marketed as "normal" in the United States is almost entirely unobtainable by most women. In fact, American media has toiled for decades to create an ideal body image that the majority of women in America would find nearly impossible to achieve. An incredibly small percentage (certainly never sixty-eight percent) of American women will ever have a body to match that on a magazine cover or commercial advertisement; yet, the frequent media portrayal of the ideal female body boldly suggests that the "average" and "normal" female body is hardly the *true* average. Where do average-sized women

in American culture fit into a society where there is such a discrepancy between real and culturally ideal bodies?

The *Desirable Weights for Men and Women* chart was published in the United States by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1959, based on life insurance applicants who were white, male, middle-class, and of Northern European descent.[1] In the forty-plus years since the chart was devised, the *Desirable Weights* table has been widely accepted as a standard, despite that the weight chart was created by an insurance company that may have been self-serving. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company may have possibly created exceptionally low weights as standards to increase their own monetary benefit; the company could charge their customers more for life insurance if they exceeded the weight standard.

With shaky, controversial standards, is there a method for a woman to indisputably determine if she is within an average weight range? A body size assessment widely used in the United Kingdom and gaining ground in the United States is the Body Mass Index (BMI), a measure obtained by dividing weight in kilograms by squared height in meters.[2] The normal range of BMI for a woman is between 19 and 24, where "'normal' refers to a 'normal healthy range' of BMI and not frequency of occurrence in the population."[3] Although this measure provides a definitive number, the scale does not take into consideration that adults usually gain weight when they age, making it difficult for older men and women to gauge whether or not they fall into the normal category.[4]

An additional way to determine normality of a female body is by using calipers to measure subcutaneous fat as opposed to total body weight.[5] However, Grogan declares that this assessment also ignores the increase of fat associated with aging, especially among women.[6] Women carry more subcutaneous fat than men from birth through the aging process, making the norms that are based on younger women even more inaccurate and mistakenly placing average-sized older women in the overweight or obese categories.

Self-assessment could possibly be an accurate method of determin-

ing an average-sized body, as maybe a woman could decide to place her own body in the normal category without ever having to calculate a number a BMI or adjust norms. However, even a woman estimating her own body size has its inaccuracies, especially because "women are so concerned about their body size that they typically overestimate it."[7] Often times, Brewis reports, women (especially young adults) imagine themselves "to be larger than they are and more distant from an identified ideal."[8]

As a result of the various measures and standards, the same woman's body could be considered underweight, within the normal range, or overweight "depending upon which measure is used and when the measure was taken."[9] Perhaps the best way to determine if a woman has an average-sized body is to utilize several measures, including self-assessment, and then consider personal factors, like age, that could impact or change the accuracy of the measures.

Average-sized female bodies, whether deemed average by a calculation, chart, or other measure, fall into a weight category where there is much debate over the health consequences. Largely ignored by popular media and the medical profession, the health benefits or risks associated with an average-sized body often must be inferred by the health benefits and risks of being underweight and those of being overweight.

Being of an average or slightly above-average weight may be extra beneficial for women, argues Sanders, a British nutritionist, as "plumper women are less likely to experience early menopause, heart disease, and osteoporosis than thin women."[10] Grogan argues that "the belief that slenderness is healthier than moderate overweight is not borne out of medical research."[11] Rothblum agrees that the medical concern for people who are moderately overweight [and perhaps of average weight] is grounded in the cultural prejudice against people who are overweight [or not thin] and there is no conclusive evidence proving otherwise.[12]

According to one source, when female BMI is correlated with mortality and fertility, a BMI of 19 (at the lower end of the average BMI range) has both the lowest mortality rate and highest fertility rate.[3]

Any BMI higher or lower than 19 has higher mortality rates and lower fertility rates, including women whose BMI falls between 19.1 and 23.9, who, Tovee et al. reported, "had a 20% increase in relative risk of mortality" despite being within the normal range.[14] However, there are also numerous health risks among women with low BMIs. One such risk is amenorrhea, or the cessation of menstrual cycles, which affects women who lack adequate body fat to menstruate.[15] In addition to the risk of amenorrhea, exceptionally thin women also have low body temperatures.[16]

Average-sized women are largely ignored, if not entirely discounted, in popular media. A quick glance at any fashion magazine will reveal the overuse of women with culturally ideal bodies who rarely represent the women who actually *purchase* the magazine:

As the pages in *Vogue* present an ideal female body which conforms to a petite dress size, we know that half the female population wears a much larger size. A glance at any high street in any town or city in the west would suggest that the models in *Vogue* do not represent normality. The "real" bodies are, quite literally, substantially different from those in *Vogue* or on a Milan fashion cat walk. We have, therefore, in terms of actual body size, a society in which real bodies and fantasized bodies are radically dissimilar.[17]

In fact, the average body size of models appearing in women's magazines has gotten progressively thinner each decade since the 1970's.[18] A study entitled "Marketing to Women" observed models appearing in advertisements from the May issues of *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Glamour* at ten-year intervals over a thirty-year span.[19] The study revealed that seven out of ten women in 2002 advertisements were considered by researchers to be "very thin and somewhat or severely emaciated."[20] In contrast, only three in ten models were classified as very thin in advertisements in 1972.[21] Despite this discrepancy between the body-size of models in advertisements and average body size of women of the same era, fashion layouts featured even *thinner* models than those used in advertisements.[22] Women who have viewed this media then begin to associate "normal" with these very

thin women, continuing to widen the gap between real and culturally ideal female bodies by the decade.

An occurrence directly illustrating the media's stance on average-sized women is that, during the thirty-year span when the "Marketing to Women" research was conducted, "the models used to advertise 'plus-size' clothing were not truly plus-size but average size."[23] Researchers noted that many "plus-size" models are, in fact, thinner than the average, non-model woman.[24] Consequently, the society at the other end of the marketing interprets average-sized women on the street as "plus-size" and not within the normal range of body size. Women who are in fact of average size may find that the misrepresentation of standard female bodies complicates the process of assessing their own bodies. Misrepresentation of plus-size versus average female bodies complicates both self-assessment of body size and society's assessment of body size.

Although the media may not use average-sized women in fashion magazines, it is not to say that women with average-sized bodies do not play a substantial role in marketing. Average-sized women are probably the primary target of the mass media and marketing industry, targeted for their failure to have the culturally ideal body. The media aim to heighten readers' anxieties, preying on women's insecurities with special emphasis on body size.[25] McCracken argues that as magazines "construct an illusory, distorted picture of the world," the models hired to appear in the magazine perpetuate the sense of failure already imposed on average-sized women in a society which commends thinness.[26]

Women's bodies play an incredibly important role on how others perceive women as human beings. People tend to link physical attractiveness with positive personal qualities as well as assign more favorable personality traits and life outcomes to those that they perceive as attractive.[27] Also, Grogan argues, women who do not conform to "the slender ideal" may face prejudice "throughout their lifespan."[28] Two physical and "potentially critical" cues that others may use to judge the attractiveness of women are size (calculated by BMI) and shape (waist-to-hip ratio or WHR).[29] WHR refers to the ratio of the width of the waist to the width of the hips, where a low WHR corresponds

to a curvaceous body. A study by Tovee et al. found that WHR had little to do with perceived attractiveness of women by men, which the researchers attributed to WHR being a relatively poor predictor of fertility.[30] BMI, on the contrary, may be used as a "primary 'screening criterion' to select the most attractive [i.e. healthiest and most fertile] women from a range of possible partners."[31] The thin, feminine ideal seems to prevail over average-sized bodies in this study, as the researchers report that the preferred BMI for attractiveness was 18 to 19, at the lower end of or below the normal range.

Tracking the history of the average-sized female body is difficult because average bodies are just that—average—and do not attract much fanfare or attention. Maybe easier to track, however, is the history of the culturally ideal body. Grogan remarks that a cultural change in the ideal body is evident, tracing the history from "the voluptuous figures favored from the Middle Ages to the turn of this century, to the thin body types favored by the fashion magazines of today."[32] Historically, culturally ideal bodies reflect what women strove for in the past, which may give an estimate of what the average-sized women of the era looked like (possibly a few BMI points or several pounds above the cultural ideal).

According to Fallon, the "reproductive figure" was preferred in the Middle Ages with "full, rounded hips and breasts" with a "fullness of stomach" that represented fertility.[33] The average weight for women in the Middle Ages, consequently, may have been higher than in American society today due to the emphasis on voluptuousness. The women in that era may not have monitored and restricted their body weight and/or diets as closely as today's women because the culturally ideal figure was full-figured. The emphasis was placed on a female's fertility, which may encourage "padding" in the form of fat on the body for protection or nourishment during pregnancy or even the appearance of pregnancy with a rounded torso.

This voluptuous cultural ideal was carried into the 19th century when, in 1863, the renowned painter Edouard Manet depicted a "reclining nude of average size" in his self-reported masterpiece

Olympia.[34] The painting was labeled as "obscene... because the subject was not considered to be sufficiently plump to be erotic."[35] Average-sized women of this time period may have felt more satisfied with their body size because they were not faced with the inevitable disappointment that occurs when cultural ideals are nearly impossible to achieve.[36] In this era, *thin* women may have felt as if they did not fit into the culturally preferred weight category.

Beginning in the twentieth century, slimness began to be idealized.[37] Rather than portraying the ideal body size of the paintings, however, the new culturally ideal female figure was now impressed upon the public by fashion models in magazine advertisements and actresses with the emergence of films in the mid-1930s. In the 1920s, the "Flapper" fashion became stylish, leading women to feel as if their normal female features, i.e. hips and breasts, were too large or womanly and did not fit the "pre-adolescent, breastless, hipless ideal."[38] Caldwell reports that women of this period resorted to "bind[ing] their breasts with foundation garments to flatten their silhouettes."[39] Average-sized women would also, according to Silverstein et al., "use starvation diets and vigorous exercise" to narrow their figures and eliminate the bodily features that the culture revered a few decades prior.[40] The "Flapper" fashion may have been the beginning of average-sized women's experiences with shame of their bodies because their figures exceeded the culturally ideal female body size.

In the 1930s the culturally ideal female body moved on to a more shapely figure, according to Grogan.[41] This voluptuous model was epitomized by Jean Harlow, who likely left average-sized women feeling better about their figures than in the previous "Flapper" era. The culturally ideal female size evolved to a thinner figure in the 1950s, and through the next few decades the culturally ideal body for women became progressively thinner to reach the "waif" and "heroin chic" appearance that fashion models maintained in the 1990s.[42] Accordingly, normal-sized women probably felt progressively worse about their figures, as these emaciated models portrayed a body size that most women would find nearly impossible to achieve. In fact,

Packard reports a woman with a normal BMI would have an easier time becoming *overweight* than ever reaching the "waif" appearance, as the biological process that determines weight "has many safeguards designed to prevent starvation [and becoming supermodel-thin], but few—if any—to prevent excess weight."[43]

Societal pressures to be thin may not be the same for women who are not Caucasian. One author, C. Haubeggar, a Latina woman living in America, records her experience of living as a Hispanic woman in a society which commends thinness.[44] The author self-reports that "according to even the most generous height and weight charts," she is "a good 25 pounds overweight."[45] Americans may think the majority of Latina women are overweight, reports Haubeggar, but "at home, we're called *bien cuidadas* (well cared for)."[45] Living in American culture is difficult for Latinos, who are greeted with much more cultural acceptance of being average or above-average weight within Hispanic communities.[46] A thin Latina friend of Haubeggar's even reported wanting to look more like the author, as the friend was cruelly nicknamed by other children *la seca* (the dry one).[47]

The Hispanic community may not be the only population within the United States in which women who are not thin are embraced. Average-sized women may find more acceptance within the African-American community as well. In 2004, *The New York Times* reported that magazines targeted at black men, like *Smooth* and *King*, "proudly redefine the pinup" with the women selected to appear in the magazines.[48] An alternative image of beauty is offered by the magazines, featuring mostly ethnic women who do not fit the thin feminine ideal.[49] Sean Cummings, *Smooth*'s editor, boasts that these magazines catering primarily to African-American young men "allow [the readers] to celebrate the beauty of our women without compromise," with "compromise" presumably suggesting the sacrifice some women may make to be thin enough to meet the modern standards of beauty.[50] Cummings also argues that magazines tailored to Caucasian men have showed the American public the Caucasian idea of beauty: a blond woman with blue-eyes who weighs one-hundred and ten pounds.[51]

With these new magazines, however, the African-Americans are showing the American public *their* idea of beauty: women with "hour (and a half) glass figures."[52]

The societal pressures that average-sized women face may in fact be very similar to those pressures faced by women who are considered overweight. Arguably, weighing in excess of the culturally ideal weight in American society could be equated with being overweight, as both groups of women (of average and above-average weight) face incredible "vigorous normalizing discourses about the appearance of the ideal body."[53] The pressures of a society which values thinness may affect women of all sizes uniformly. These pressures may lead to the development of negative body images, possibly as a result of the woman's recognition of her failure to meet society's weight standard. Research shows that few women are content with their body size and "being 'thinner' is an endlessly pursued goal."[54] Women exceeding the cultural weight ideal may believe that "they have not adequately controlled their bodies as they should; they have failed."[55]

Both overweight and average-weight women face the notion that the female body "has long been regarded as unstable and permeable."[56] The female body is considered by society to be changeable, suggestive of a cultural belief that each female can and should mold her body to reach the ideal. According to Grogan, Americans actually blame women who weigh more than the cultural ideal, attributing their failure to conform to the slender cultural ideal to personal irresponsibility and lack of self-control; all women who exceed the slim ideal face the "erroneous belief that the individual is 'to blame' for increased body weight."[57]

Among women, dieting is the most common method of decreasing body weight and combating the cultural rejection of their bodies.[58] Arguably, dieting may physically represent the woman's mental acknowledgment of her failure to embody slimness, and Ogden reports that about 95% of women diet at some time in their lives.[59] However, "given the stress of dieting, it may be more stressful to try to fit the norms of attractiveness [by restricting caloric intake] than not to fit them [and not restrict caloric intake]" according to Ross.[60] Dieting

in average-sized women to accomplish an aesthetic ideal may not even be effective; research suggests that dieting effectively creates a lasting reduction in body weight in only 5% of individuals who are non-obese.[61] Therefore, for both average-sized and overweight women, dieting can be a distressing and often an ineffective way to manage the bombardment of societal pressure to fit the thin cultural ideal.

A method of relieving the societal pressures that average-sized women face is to create a shift in what Americans consider to be the ideal female body. If the ideal female body adjusts to a more realistic female body type which better represents the majority of American women, then presumably the societal pressures to fit a waif-like ideal will subside. However, an ideal, "by definition, can be met by only a minority of those who strive for it," as the "ideal is always that which is most difficult to achieve and most unnatural."[62] Therefore, the likelihood of the American ideal of a woman's body shifting to a more realistic figure is slight.

Perhaps a better alternative is for American culture to accept average-sized women as the norm instead of the slim female body marketed as the norm by media today. The slim female ideal may persist, but the media could attempt to aid the American public in distinguishing between real and ideal by publicly speaking on the impossibility of average-sized women ever reaching the ideal female figure shown in marketing, including the consequences of dieting, eating disorders, and extreme thinness. A collective effort to distinguish between real and ideal female bodies could be furthered if more average-sized women were incorporated into marketing and advertisements, providing the public with an accurate depiction of the average bodies of American women. This resolution would allow a cultural ideal to be upheld, but encourage the American public not to confuse the ideal woman's body with the average, or real, woman's body.

The recognition of average-sized women as the norm may necessitate the citizens of the United States reexamining past instances of discrimination where human beings were undervalued or ignored because of failure to fit a cultural ideal. After centuries of prejudice, the

Western world (and arguably the *majority* of the world, to some extent) now accepts human physical ability along a continuum, including the disabled (e.g., Special Olympics) and the sick.[63] According to Evans, "there is a widespread, if not general, recognition that the human body is not perfect or imperfect but a continuum of different possibilities and different strengths."[64] Along that same vein, American society should develop a similar acceptance of female body size.

Human bodies, especially female, naturally come in a variety of shapes and sizes; society should accept body-size on a continuum just as the culture has accepted other human physical attributes on a continuum. With the rejection of body-size categories and the agreement on a spectrum, maybe the societal attitude that "the body should be a perfect, seamless demonstration of the virtue of efficient and perfect function" will be eliminated.[65] Instead of a strict female ideal that decrees thinness, a "more diverse view of beauty" will lessen societal pressures to be thin.[66] Women with culturally ideal bodies, who comprise an incredibly small percentage of the population of American women, will no longer be considered normal or average; instead, they will be regarded by the American public as the exception rather than the rule. Accordingly, women with average-sized bodies in the United States may finally earn the distinction they deserve: normal.

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The Men of Fountain Park

The Men of Fountain Park
Sit on their benches and talk,
Cigarillos burning down to cracked fingers,
And yesterday's coffee cups
Held in chapped palms.
They stare and call at a pretty girl,
Say hello to a boy,
And remember their youths
Until the air turns cold.

ERIN K. O'HARE

Retreat and Seek
EMILY WILLIE

DIGITAL PRINT

Gwendolyn Brooks

There must be a lyrical fire in your fingertips, robust
Legions of words promenading from Shadrack's
Bosom into your poetic consciousness
That makes your tongue so
Divine.

Such that your holographic tapestry
conjoined realism with scripture
making everything in between,
and surrounding your imagination,
the poetic utopia
that inspires me.

Nursed a wanting
Race of revolutionaries at your breast
When you spoke
lyrics others could not voice,
Poemed in eternity's womb
what the greats could not journey to paper,
And in some eclipsed niche of heaven
the angels had yet to conceive,
You found that rough, lovely
Language of God.

CELESTE STANLEY

Exodus Rising

Our fore-fathers lie
Beneath our feet,
They are trying to make proud faces
Out of cotton stained concrete.

They think we have not fought proudly
With bounded wrists,
Have not terrorized nor exploded gently
In our enemies midst.

But they too as we too
Want relief from this red isle,
They seek a springtime topped
With thornless smiles, a heaven

Dirtied by the deep islanding, a place,
That strikes beautifully at our knotted race.

CELESTE STANLEY

Artist, Daughter
AIMEÉ KIDD

GELATIN SILVER PRINT

The Grey Room
JOSHUA BURKHART

DIGITAL PRINT

Constantin Stanislavski

Actor, Director, and Teacher

CINDY ORNDORF

Constantin Stanislavski* was one of the greatest influences on drama in the early twentieth century. His theories on acting revolutionized the way acting was taught at the time. Many of the basic concepts of his style, what became known as the Stanislavski system, are still taught today, and actors in both theater and film show his influence in their acting styles.

Constantin Sergeyevich Alexeyev was born on January 18,** 1863 into a wealthy Moscow family. His father owned a factory that manufactured gold and silver thread, and for a good part of his life, Constantin worked for his father, maintaining his involvement in theater during his spare time. Actors in Russia were originally serfs, and even after serfdom was abolished, actors were seen as lower-class, so for the son of a prominent businessman, acting was not an acceptable profession (Hodge 11).

From an early age, Constantin showed an interest in the theater. This interest was fostered and encouraged by his parents. Constantin and his siblings attended the theater with their parents, as well as the ballet, the circus, and even the opera. His parents organized and took

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* Due to the difficulty of translating Russian into English, the spelling of names varies from one document to the next. I have been consistent within my text, but quoted material from other sources uses the spelling in the original source.

** The Russian calendar varies slightly from the calendar used in the West. Therefore, some sources give different dates for the same event.

part in his first home performance, when Constantin was just seven years old. They were the audience for performances of the children in "Costanzo Alexeyev's Circus" and later for the Alexeyev Circle, a theater troupe consisting of the Alexeyev children and their cousins.

The Alexeyev Circle first performed on September 5, 1877, on the occasion of Constantin's mother's birthday. Directed by their tutor, they performed a series of four one-act plays. This was the fourteen-year-old Constantin's first performance as an actor. He performed in two of the plays, *A Cup of Tea* and *The Old Mathematician*. His role in the first was one he had seen a favorite actor play, and he attempted to imitate the way Muzil portrayed the character. Although he left the stage feeling as if he had copied the actor's style well, his audience disagreed, saying he spoke too quickly and indistinctly and moved his hands too rapidly. This criticism, he later came to realize, revealed the difference between an actor's impression of his work and the impression he is actually conveying to the audience (Edwards 30). In addition to this being his first performance as an actor, it was the beginning of Constantin's critical analysis of his own acting and of acting and performances in general. Starting with his comments on his performance in these two plays, he kept notebooks of his impressions and analysis that became a foundation for his own acting theories and directing style in the years to come.

The Alexeyev Circle lasted eleven years. Soon, Constantin was directing the group as well as acting in their productions. He and his fellow actors devoted enormous amounts of time to each of their productions, especially considering that they often had other responsibilities (schooling, work, etc.) and their acting was purely amateur entertainment. For one of their productions, *The Mikado*, Constantin went to great lengths to create the Japanese atmosphere proper to the operetta. A troupe of Japanese acrobats was invited to stay at the Alexeyev estate to train the actors in the Japanese style of movement. For four months, the Alexeyev Circle worked on the production, learning how to walk, dance, and bow in the Japanese manner and how to handle a fan. "The women walked all day with

legs tied together as far as the knee, the fan became a necessary object of everyday life..." (Stanislavski, qtd. in Edwards 35). The final product was a successful run of four performances in April and May 1887.

Constantin's father encouraged and supported the troupe. In the very beginning, he provided them with an actual theater in which to rehearse and perform. A wing of the family's country estate in Lyubimovka was in such a state of disrepair that it would have been demolished, but instead, the elder Alexeyev had it renovated and converted into a theater. There was even space behind the stage for dressing rooms and storage of property and scenery, and the balcony in the hall became the boxes of the auditorium (Edwards 29). A few years later, the success of the Circle prompted him to provide them another space. This time, he renovated two rooms in the family's Moscow home to be stage and auditorium. The new performance space was opened in 1883 with an operetta called *Javotta* (Edwards 32).

Towards the end of his time directing the Alexeyev Circle, Constantin began to act in other productions. His desire to act was so strong that he would take any part he could get. This led him to accept parts in some productions that were less than respectable, especially for a son of a wealthy businessman. In 1884, to protect both his own name and his family's reputation, he decided to take a stage name (Hodge 11). He chose Stanislavski, the name of an actor he once met, thinking the Polish sound of the name would further disguise his identity (Edwards 39). (Some sources give other origins for the name Stanislavski – Carnicke claims it was the name not of a fellow actor but of Constantin's favorite Polish ballerina (Hodge 34).) It worked, perhaps too well, for one night, he made his entrance in a rather risqué French farce and was shocked to find his equally surprised parents seated in the center box (Edwards 39).

Stanislavski wanted to form a group that would allow amateurs of all arts the opportunity to exercise their art. With the assistance of Alexandre Fedotov, Fyodor Kommisarzhevsky, and Count Salogub, he formed the Society of Art and Literature in 1888. This group gathered writers and actors under Fedotov, musicians and opera singers under

Kommisarzhevsky, and graphic artists under Salogub to produce the plays of such playwrights as Tolstoy, Pushkin, Ostrovsky, Molière, and Goldoni (Hirsch 22). However, the Society's finances soon declined and among other cost-cutting measures, the director's salary was cut. Fedotov left, and Stanislavski took over directing the Society's productions with the assistance of Fedotov's wife, Glikeria Fedotova, a well-known actress and Stanislavski's friend and former teacher (Edwards 46). This led to Stanislavski's first directing experience with serious drama, the 1891 production of Tolstoy's *The Fruits of Enlightenment* that displayed glimmerings of the approach Stanislavski would take in his later work with the Moscow Art Theater in his attempts to find the "living, truthful, real life, not commonplace life, but artistic life" within the play (Edwards 47).

It was while he was working with the Society of Art and Literature that Stanislavski was introduced to the acting troupe of the Duke of Saxe-Meinigen on their second visit to Russia in 1890. He was impressed with their well-disciplined mob scenes and historical accuracy, although both of these aspects had their faults. The strict discipline turned the director into a tyrant, something that it took Stanislavski a few years to realize could detract from the production. The historically accurate, incredibly detailed sets and costumes hid under their beauty less-than-perfect acting. The emphasis was placed on the total picture rather than on the acting. However, Stanislavski did take away from the Saxe-Meinigen troupe the example of a true ensemble and the idea of bringing out the "essence of the production" (Edwards 45).

On June 22, 1897, a conversation took place that would impact the direction of theater in Russia and the world. Stanislavski was invited to meet Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko at the Slavansky Bazaar, a famous Moscow restaurant. They met at two in the afternoon and talked through lunch, coffee, and dinner, moving to Stanislavski's home outside Moscow when it got late. By eight the next morning, they had discussed and agreed upon the basic principles for their new theater, the Moscow Art Theater.

Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko was an instructor at the Philhar-

monic School, one of the two dramatic schools in Moscow. As a teacher, he strove to improve the quality of the student productions he directed. He worked in the same direction Stanislavski was working, asking his students to "reflect meditate, and dream about the roles and then tell in their own words the lives of the characters not only during the time of the play but beforehand and afterwards" (Edwards 58) – very similar to Stanislavski's direction to the Alexeyev Circle to live according to the given circumstances of the play on a particular day. Danchenko was also a playwright. Two of his plays received the Griboyedov prize, given to "the best play of the season" (Edwards 58); the second to win this prize was chosen over Chekhov's *The Sea Gull*, although Danchenko protested this choice. Despite his success as a playwright, Danchenko was devoted to his teaching and his dream of founding a theater of his own "where plays of literary worth could be produced" (Edwards 59). Constantin Stanislavski's production of Tolstoy's *The Fruits of Enlightenment* in 1891 had brought the young director to his attention – his comments on the production were that "no one has ever seen such an exemplary performance on an amateur stage...Tolstoy's comedy was played with a better ensemble and more intelligently than any play is ever played even in the best private theaters in Moscow" (Edwards 48) – and he chose Stanislavski to be his partner in his new venture.

Danchenko and Stanislavski agreed upon some key principles for their new theater during their historic meeting. Most of their ideas were concerned with correcting the faults they saw in the theater as it was. Their first point was that their new company would be an ensemble without stars. "Today Hamlet, tomorrow a supernumerary, but even as a supernumerary you must become an artist" (Stanislavski, qtd. in Hirsch 24). They agreed that discipline would be strict, but at the same time, the working conditions would be comfortable. They wanted the audience to focus on the play, so they decided to rid the auditorium of distractions including both the decorations common in theaters of the day and the orchestra and also to encourage the audience to take their seats before the curtain rose (Benedetti 17). Although common practice was to use furniture and scenery from previous plays and

whatever costumes the actor chose, Stanislavski and Danchenko agreed that the set, furniture, and costumes for each of their productions should be chosen specifically for the production to form a cohesive and appropriate artistic image (Edwards 64).

Both Stanislavski and Danchenko had been the director of their own group prior to the founding of their new company. In the new company, they divided the roles. Danchenko, as a successful playwright, had more experience and knowledge in the literary matters of the theater, so he was given the literary portion of the work and the final say in discussions of literary content, as well as administrative tasks. Stanislavski was more experienced in production than Danchenko, so it fell to him to manage the production end of the company and work with the actors. As Danchenko said, "he [Stanislavski] had the last word in the region of *form*, and I in the region of *content*" (qtd. in Edwards 66).

Another of the things Stanislavski and Danchenko agreed upon during their historic meeting was that their original company should be made up mostly of actors from among Stanislavski's actors at the Society of Art and Literature and Danchenko's students at the Philharmonic School. They chose their actors carefully, looking for personalities that would fit their new rules. It was a new kind of company they were forming, one in which the group and the play outweighed the individual. They were more interested in the less accomplished actor who was willing to change than the prominent one whose crowd-pleasing habits were too ingrained to be altered (Hirsch 25). In the end, they chose thirty-nine actors and actresses, among them Olga Knipper, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Ivan Moskvin, and Vassily Kachalov, and Stanislavski's wife Lilina.

The first production of the new theater was Tolstoy's *Tsar Feodor Ivanovich*. Rehearsals began on June 14, 1898, in Pushinko, a town outside Moscow (Edwards 68). The company spent the summer living there together, rehearsing for hours every day and building a feeling of community and a collective spirit. They returned to Moscow in the fall and opened on October 14th. The realism of the settings that

recreated 17th century Russia surprised the audience, and the play was well received (Brockett 440).

Despite the success of *Tsar Feodor*, the next few productions of the Moscow Art Theater were poorly received by both critics and audiences. It was not until the end of the first season that the theater managed to establish itself with a production of Chekhov's *The Sea Gull*. Premiered in 1896 at the Alexandrinsky Theater, *The Sea Gull* had not been very successful in its first production (Brockett 440). However, Stanislavski's production two years later was counted as "a great victory" (Edwards 78). When the curtain closed after the first act, the silence from the house was so profound that the actors were convinced they had failed. The thunder of applause soon reassured them, and they were able to bow as the curtain was raised and lowered no less than six times (Hirsch 19). The success of Stanislavski's production was due in part to his innovative staging. For example, in the first scene, he placed a group of actors on a bench along the footlights – with their backs to the audience. After the initial shock at the breaking of conventions, one audience member wrote, "the spectator ceased to *watch* the performance, and began to *live* with it" (Hirsch 18).

Because of the success of Chekhov's play, the Moscow Art Theater took the sea gull as its emblem and became known as the "House of Chekhov" (Brockett and Findlay 241). They produced three to five new plays each year and kept their successful productions in their repertory. By keeping a full repertory of successful plays, they were able to survive on little more than their box office receipts and still produce new works. In 1902, with the financial backing of a wealthy businessman named Morozov, the company was able to recondition their theater (most of the money went into the stage and actors' spaces, contrary to the usual practice of spending most of the money on the audience spaces) and increase the acting company from thirty-nine to one hundred actors and actresses (Edwards 83).

In the decades to follow, the Moscow Art Theater produced plays in many different styles. Stanislavski was continually experimenting with new ways to stage productions, although he was less than satisfied

with nonrealistic styles. As a director, his attention centered on the actors, and any style that dematerialized the actor did not suit him (Brockett 455). In 1905, he founded a studio to develop nonrealistic work, which he placed under the direction of Vsevelod Meyerhold, a former member of the original Moscow Art Theater troupe. However, Stanislavski was displeased with the direction Meyerhold was taking with the studio, in particular with his subordination of the actors to his own directorial goal, and the studio was closed later that year without having performed for the public (Brockett and Findlay 251). Another of Stanislavski's experiments with nonrealistic styles was his production of Andreyev's *The Life of Man* in 1907. The play, an allegory depicting the story of Man's life, was a popular success, but Stanislavski removed it from production because he was dissatisfied with the abstractness the play required (Brockett 455). The 1912 production of *Hamlet* designed by Gordon Craig was another experiment Stanislavski was ultimately unhappy with. He invited Craig to design on the basis of his revolutionary ideas of scenic design – the two-dimensionality of painted scenery had always seemed out of place for Stanislavski in relation to the three-dimensional actors – but Craig's design of moveable screens was too abstract (Brockett and Findlay 253).

During his years of acting and directing, Stanislavski had always been concerned with the problems actors face. In 1906, during his performance as Dr. Stockmann in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, he began to develop what he called a "grammar" of acting (Hodge 13). Three years later, he introduced it to his actors in rehearsal for *A Month in the Country*, but he was met with much resistance from the actors. However, the critical success of the play convinced him that it was worth continuing the experiment, and he founded the First Studio in 1911 specifically for that purpose. He placed Leopold Sulerzhitsky (formerly a stagehand at the Moscow Art Theater) in charge of the studio. Among the first students were Richard Boleslavsky, Michael Chekhov, and Yevgeny Vakhtangov, who was to become the director of the studio after Sulerzhitsky died in 1916 (Brockett and Findlay 254).

What we now know as the Stanislavski system or method of acting

developed over decades of directing and teaching. It was brought to the West when Stanislavski toured the Moscow Art Theater's company in Europe and the United States in 1923 and 1924. While on tour, some of the actors defected from Russia and stayed in the United States, where they set up their own acting schools and spread the acting method they learned from their teacher. Among these actors were Maria Ouspenskaya, Richard Boleslavsky, and Michael Chekhov (Hodge 14). Another factor in spreading the ideas of Stanislavski to the West was his decision to publish his writings in the United States while he was there. (Because of the way Russian copyright laws were set up at the time, publishing abroad was the only way his rights would be protected.)

The system as Stanislavski designed it is meant to be a guide for the actor. It is meant to provide suggestions as to how the actor can tap his own natural creativity. The points of the system are only suggestions, not ironclad rules, and Stanislavski encouraged the actor or director to take whichever paths worked for the individual. Just as Max Reinhardt insisted that there is no single approach that is appropriate for the staging of every play (Brockett and Findlay 214), it was Stanislavski's idea that there is no single approach that works for every actor. However, many of the basic principles are the same. It is more in the applying of these principles to the role that the individuality of the actor comes into play. The basic principles of the Stanislavski system of acting are as follows:

- The mind and body are inextricably linked. Each reacts to the other. No emotion can occur without a physical response, and no physical action can take place without a psychological response.
- Because the body affects the mind and emotions, physical tension has a negative impact on the actor's creativity. It not only distorts physical motion but also paralyzes the actor's ability to concentrate and fantasize.
- The actor must find a way to connect with the role he is playing. (The Russian word Stanislavski uses can be translated into English as *to feel*, *to experience*, *to live through*, and other phrases, none of which quite reveal all of the nuances of the

Russian word. The most common translation of Stanislavski's term is *to live the role* (Hodge 17).) The actor should exist as the character in the moment of the play; the creative act is then left to the audience, since at that moment, the actors are the characters.

- The actor must develop a mental and physical state that allows the role to take root and develop in them. Stanislavski calls this a "sense of self" (Hodge 18).

From these major points of Stanislavski's system, particular exercises and processes were developed. Some of the exercises developed the physical aspect of the actor's abilities, while techniques helped the actor with the mental and emotional aspect of acting. To begin with, the actor's voice and body must be trained to the point that both will obey his every thought. The actor must be aware of stage techniques in order to project their characterization without seeming contrived. Observance of reality, real people in real life, provides the actor with a basis for a role that is real and natural. Analysis of the script was imperative; the actor must absorb the given circumstances of the play as well as his own character's motivations in each scene and their "through-line" or overall objective (Brockett 441). At all moments onstage, the actor must focus on what is going on around him to give the feeling that this is the first time these events have occurred, that the events are not part of a scene that has been rehearsed many times for the past few months. Finally, the actor must always strive to perfect his understanding and proficiency with the role (Brockett 441).

Often what is taught in the West of Stanislavski's system is incomplete or skewed. A common mistake is placing emphasis on either the mind or the physical part of the method, even though Stanislavski considered neither more important than the other. During the Soviet period, censors altered his published works to make it conform to their political ideologies (Brockett 441). The difficulty of translating from the Russian (Stanislavski neither spoke nor wrote English) adds more confusion to the situation. Also, the works in English were copyrighted under the name of the initial translator, Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, so

she and her estate had control of the English translations. Rearranging and editing has made what has been released to the public an inaccurate picture of Stanislavski's work (Brockett 441).

Two of the most important American groups to be influenced by Stanislavski's methods were the Group Theater and the Actors Studio. The Group Theater was founded in 1931 on the model of the Moscow Art Theater. Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg, two of the three founders, had studied at the American Laboratory Theater, which was run by Maria Ouspenskaya and Richard Boleslavsky, two of the Moscow Art Theater actors who remained in the United States after the theater's tour. Although it only lasted ten years, the Group Theater's influence could be felt in the continuing work of former members (Brockett 498). The Actors Studio was started in 1947 by Robert Lewis, Elia Kazan, and Cheryl Crawford, but one year later, Lee Strasberg became the head of the studio. Calling it simply "The Method," he taught an adaptation of Stanislavski's method emphasizing emotion memory and exploration of the psyche to his students, some of whom went on to Hollywood as well as the stages of New York (Brockett 520). Among the actors who show the influence of the Actor's Studio (some from secondhand experience rather than actual time as Strasberg's students) are Marlon Brando, James Dean, Paul Newman, Anne Bancroft, Geraldine Page, Al Pacino, Robert Duvall, and Jack Nicholson (Hirsch 293).

Stanislavski never considered his system complete. For him, it was always evolving as he continued to direct and teach up until a few months before his death in the summer of 1938. The last project he directed, a production of Molière's *Tartuffe*, opened in December 1939, a year and a half after his death, but he had been rehearsing the actors for over two years before his death (Hodge 32). During his rehearsals for this production, he was experimenting further with his system, trying to come up with a better technique than the affective cognition that he had most recently developed (Hodge 32). Although he had begun to publish his writings on his acting system, only two of his works had been published by the time of his death, his autobiography *My Life in Art* and the first part of his system, which he called *An Actor's*

Work on Himself and which we in the West know as *An Actor Prepares* (Hodge 16).

Constantin Stanislavski had a life-long obsession with the theater. He began performing when he was seven, acting when he was fourteen, directing while still in his teens, and teaching from the very beginning, and at the age of seventy-five, as an invalid in his own home, he was still holding rehearsals until a few months before his death. His directing was revolutionary for the time in Russia, and his method of acting revolutionized acting and the teaching of it worldwide.

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Linguistic Power

Cultural Beliefs Embedded in Genital Slang

SARAH MCCLOSKEY

Modern humans' unique ability to use language sets them apart from other primates and allows them to create the complex cultures seen around the globe. As time passes and culture transforms, humans need new ways to express the world around them, the changes they experience, and the new or altered ideas and concepts that emerge. The most common way this is accomplished is through the use and alteration words already in the lexicon. Linguists call such words *neosemanticisms*, words or groups of words that already exist within a language that acquire new meanings by use in new situations.[1] Taboo subjects are often referred to by a multitude of words in order to try to avoid directly mentioning the culturally-unacceptable term. New words, neosemanticisms, are often used in this way (especially euphemisms and slang words). Euphemisms are "mild, indirect, or vague term[s]" that are substituted for words that are "considered harsh, blunt, or offensive."[2] This allows one to hint at the subject matter without actually directly mentioning the tabooed topic. The same is accomplished by using slang, short-lived coinages and figures of speech that are "used in place of standard terms."[3] Not only does this allow the speaker to avoid the unmentionable subject, but it also infuses personal and cultural beliefs of the speaker into the subject. "The use of slang metaphors permits speakers to not only convey specific prepositional information, but also some indication of their attitude towards this information."[4] The meanings of slang words rely on "shared cultural

knowledge" of individuals, and thus express cultural feelings towards a variety of topics.[5]

This paper explores the slang and euphemisms associated with one of society's most tabooed subjects, genitals. Society holds and fosters many beliefs and stereotypes about both sexes, which are inexorably tied to the language used to describe the most sexed and gendered parts of males and females: the genitals. Braun and Kitzinger stress that these cultural messages can be found in such words: "Slang evokes meaning by drawing on the shared cultural knowledge of the users (McArthur, 1992), and slang terms for female genitalia would thus be expected to encode ideas about women's bodies, women's place in the world, and women's place in sex."[6] Through an analysis of slang terms used for the genitals of males and females, I will demonstrate that female genitalia is more likely to be referred to in a negative and derogatory manner, mirroring the submissive and inferior status women hold in western societies. In addition, it is more likely to be males that use these derogatory terms, demonstrating the imbalance of power between the sexes.

GENITAL SLANG CATEGORIES

Virginia Braun and Celia Kitzinger conducted research on genital slang in Britain, collecting word sets from 156 females and 125 males. They broke down the resultant collection of female genital slang (a total of 317 words) and male genital slang (351 words) into 26 categories:

> standard slang, euphemism, space, receptacle, abjection, hair, animal, money, personification, gender identity, edibility, danger, nonsense, sex and pleasure, plants, fantasy creatures, and urination ... musical instruments, vehicle, leisure or sporting equipment, size, nongenital body parts, tools, precious things, physical shape, and erection.[7]

For the purposes of this paper, genital slang words are placed and examined in three condensed categories: euphemism, space (includes receptacle), and derogatory (includes abjection and danger). A brief

overview of words that fit into most of the various other categories and their implications precedes the discussion of the three main categories discussed; this overview displays the wide variety of slang used and the meanings imbedded in them. All of the words examined have been collected from studies done by Braun and Kitzinger (2001) and Cameron (1992), lists of words accessed on the internet, and terms found in Lawrence Paros' book, *Bawdy Language: Everything you Always Wanted to Do but Were Too Afraid to Say*.

OVERVIEW OF CATEGORIES

Although a limited number of categories of slang words are examined in depth in this paper, all slang can expose cultural and personal beliefs about men and women. References to hair is more commonly found in female genital slang (e.g., "hair pie," "muff," "beard," "carpet") than in male genital terms, perhaps due to the fact that unlike female genitals, male genitals are highly visible over the hair.[8] Such metaphors invoke animals, another large category of genital slang. Both male and female genitalia are referred to as animals, but again, there seem to be more for females than males. The female genitals are frequently referred to as a furry animal, such as a "beaver," "badger," or the popular "pussy." The latter term first emerged in 1662 in a toast of the period: "Aeneas, here's a health to thee, to *pusse* and good company."[9] The most common male terms were snakes: "black mamba," "one-eyed trouser snake," "python," and "anaconda."[10] Female genitals are referred to as domestic animals, while those of males are wild beasts; women are supposed to be submissive and tame, while males are to be dominant and strong.

There are many female genital terms that deal with money (e.g., "tuppence," "fur purse," "thruppeny bit"), tying a monetary value to a woman's genitals. Female genital slang words that have historically meant money ("fish," "lettuce," "quiff") may have simultaneously meant "prostitute." The amount of money is very small, which suggests "reference to money rather than to value.[11] Braun and Kitzinger found no male slang that dealt with money, although they did find a number that depicted preciousness: "family jewels," "sexual wand,"

"crown jewels," and "the scepter."[12] They are not money, which is spent, but something that should be treasured and loved; "their (often priceless) value is also higher than that of the money FGTs [female genital terms]."[13] Women's genitals are depicted as being of low value, something to be spent (used), while males' are priceless and should be cherished.

Male genitals are frequently personified by both men and women, given names such as "Peter," "John Thomas," or "His Highness," suggesting that the penis has a life of its own. Often the names are those of important individuals: kings, historical figures, and war heroes. Female genitalia are also named, but more often by women themselves and never with the prestigious names that are given to male genitalia. Genitals of both sexes are referred to as food, although it is more common for male genitals than female.[14] "Sausage," "pork sword," "meat and two vegetables," "banana," "sugar stick," and "creamsicle" are all terms used for male genitals, while those of females are referred to as "love muffin," "meat curtains," "clam," and "tuna waterfall."[15, 16, 17] Men produce more food related terms for both their own, and female genitalia.[18]

Terms related to sex or pleasure are rarer than those of other categories, and were produced more often by men than women in Braun and Kitzinger's study. Male genital terms focused on pleasure (e.g., "joy giver," "passion giver," "pussy pleaser"), although it is not always clear who is feeling the pleasure. "Pink pleasure palace," and "rave in the cave" are representative female terms focused on pleasure. Variations of "fuck-stick," referred to the act of sex, in which the "fuck hole" or "wank shaft" of the woman would be entered. These words refer to the woman as the "passive site for male sexual activity."[19] Male genitals are often referred to as sporting equipment ("hockey stick"), vehicles ("big red fun bus"), musical instruments ("pink oboe") and leisure related items ("toy"), all things associated with fun and enjoyable activities. All of the words in these categories imply a difference between men and women, with men being dominant, active, and enjoyable and women being passive, something to be used, and of low value.

EUPHEMISMS

Braun and Kitzinger coded words as euphemisms if they "made vague reference to a general body location."[20] Such indirect and vague terms replace specific and uncomfortable words for those who use them. "Euphemistic genital slang is vague to the extreme, with no clear bodily reference point, which implicitly reinforces the idea that we should not talk, or even think, about genitalia explicitly."[21] Euphemisms are used for both male and female genitalia, but in general, more euphemisms are used to describe female genitalia than those of men.

FEMALE GENITAL EUPHEMISMS

"Many people appear to consider women's genitalia to be unmentionable;" one study found 53% of women to be somewhat uncomfortable with using the word "vagina."[22] A veil of mystery covers the genitalia when euphemistic or coy words such as "crotch" and "down there" are used. Words such as "downstairs," "front bottom," "hairy area," "middle," "the best part," "in heaven," and "star," all refer to some ambiguous area on the body.[23, 24] Many of these euphemisms can be traced back through history: Shakespeare used "the dearest bodily part" to refer to a female's genitals, while Chaucer used "la belle chose." "Star" can be traced back to the 16th century, while in the 17th century, one often heard female genitals referred to as "pretty-pretty."[25] These terms reinforce that the belief that women's genitals are mysterious and even taboo, further the suppression of female sexuality.

MALE GENITAL EUPHEMISMS

The terms "thing" and "thingy" have been used since Middle English to describe both female and male genitalia, although "thingy" is more closely associated with male genitals.[26] While euphemisms are not used as often to refer to male genitals, there are a number of terms that are commonly used: "bits," "privates," "end," "extension," "private member," "natural parts," "fancy work," "parts below," and "unruly member."[27, 28] According to historian Douglas Harper, the first use of the word "member" to refer to the penis was in 1356, from the Latin

membrum (meaning limb, member of the body) *virile*,[29] although Paros states it was in 1290.[30] A 19th century toast recorded by Paros states: "Here's to the small circle of my female friends. May it never be entered except by an upright member."[31]

PRODUCERS AND DISCUSSION

According to Braun and Kitzinger's study, women are more likely to use euphemisms to describe female genitalia, although there were no sex differences in producing euphemistic terms for male genitalia.[32] This may occur due to the cultural belief that women are to speak politely and properly, leading them to produce more euphemistic slang to avoid using tabooed or harsh language. It is also possible that females are exposed to euphemisms more frequently than males, thus influencing their tendency to use them. "Regardless of why women produce more, the continued presence of euphemistic FGTs [female genital terms] reinforces a situation where women talk about their bodies in 'oblique and disconnected language' (Jackson, 1999, p. 37) and encourages an ongoing mystification (and denial) of women's genitalia."[33]

SPACE

Spatial slang words make reference to a form that is created due to a lack of material or to something defined by its space (containers, places to put things). The majority of spatial terms are used in reference to women, while a few container/receptacle words are used to describe male genitalia.

FEMALE GENITAL SPATIAL TERMS

Many of the spatial terms that are used for women reference landscapes, "spaces created by 'absences' of land – a cave, a hole, a love canal, a tunnel, or the Grand Canyon."[34] The use of "hole" as slang for the vagina or vulva can be traced back to 1340.[35] Paros lists similar words and the time period in which they were used: "your better 'ole" (16th – 19th c.), "sweet-scented hole" (C. 1690), "crack" (16th – 20th c.), "bottomless pit" (18th c.), and "crevice" (19th c.).[36] These terms

"implicitly constitute the female body as a landscape, with attendant suggestions of exploration, colonization, and ownership," simultaneously portraying the female body as mysterious and submissive.[37] Slang such as "hairy goblet," "furry letterbox," "honey pot," and "willy warmer" all portray a woman's genitals as a place to put things, containers for semen, and containers for the penis. "Canister," "box" (17th c.), "mustard pot" (19th c.), and "the miraculous pitcher that holds water mouth downward" (18th c.) all suggest that the vagina is nothing more than a place for a man to use or insert something into; it has no value of its own without its capacity to hold something.[38]

MALE GENITAL SPATIAL TERMS

Neither Paros nor Braun and Kitzinger list landscape spatial terms for male genitalia, and very few receptacle terms are used. Terms such as "sac," "ball sac," "nut sac," or "bag" all refer to the testicles.[39, 40] In the 16th century, the word "culls," a variation of the Latin word *coleus* (meaning "bag") was used to refer to the testicles. "In Old English, the bag came disguised as a *cod* (c. 1398), encouraging countless scabrous puns ... Today, a 'well-filled crotch area' is called as *basket*, and the art of wearing tight pants to good advantage, *basket weaving* ... Others privately speak of a *bucket of balls* (mid 20th c.) ..."[41] These receptacles, instead of being empty and waiting for something to come and fill it, are full of a man's means of reproduction, the sperm. In this sense, men are full, and women are wanting.

PRODUCERS AND DISCUSSION

Men are more likely than women to use spatial genital slang, and, due to the lack of many male spatial terms, to use them for female genitals. "Women's genitalia are defined by the 'potential space' of the vagina, rather than by the presence of the different aspects of the female genitalia."[42] The only time in which the female vagina in any way represents a hole is when it is aroused, for when not, the vaginal walls touch. Thus, these spatial terms are closely tied to the use of the vagina solely for sex, as a place for the male to "enter." "The prevalence of

terms within this category ... seems to encode – albeit in an often milder form – this construction of the vagina/woman as a receptacle for male desire."[43] The usage of spatial terms by men asserts a male's dominant role in the sex act and in the society in general; historically the landowner and explorer, the man now turns to the female body to enact similar roles.

DEROGATORY

Derogatory words are categorized as belittling or disparaging, used to distract from or diminish the quality of the genitals. Braun and Kitzinger's category of abjection falls in the derogatory category, for abjections are words that deal with dirtiness, uncooked meat, secretions, smells, and wounds. Also included in the derogatory category are terms that imply danger, representing the genitalia as harmful.

DEROGATORY FEMALE GENITAL TERMS

The word "cunt" has been a deprecating word to women since Roman times. Originally believed to have been derived from the Latin *cunnus*, ("female genitalia"), the word is also related to the Old English word "cwithe," meaning "womb."[44] "Cunt" can be found in Old and Middle English, Old Norse, Middle Low and Low German, and Dutch; it became a taboo word in the 15th century. "Between 1700 and 1959 it was considered obscene, and it was a legal offence to print it."[45] World War I soldiers used expressions such as "You silly cunt." Paros explains the severity of "cunt": "*Cunt* ... is not only a term filled with contempt and disdain, but it is applied indiscriminately, regardless of the person's character, insulting not only toward whom the remark is aimed, but all women everywhere."[46] The word "quaint" as a noun became used to describe female genitals as early as 1320 and emerged as an adjective in the early 11th century. As the latter, the word can used to describe something or someone as "cunning, crafty, given to scheming or plotting," "strange, unusual, unfamiliar, odd, curious (in character or appearance)," or "of actions, schemes, devices, etc.: marked by ingenuity, cleverness, or cunning."[47] These definitions, carried over

from the adjective to the noun, describe the female genitals (and females themselves) as crafty, scheming, odd, and untrustworthy.

Many of the most common words for female genitals are also the most derogatory: "twat," "gash," and the aforementioned "cunt." The origins of "twat" are unknown, although it entered the Old English Dictionary as a vagina around the same time as "cock."[48] Today, it is listed in the American Heritage Dictionary as an obscene term for female genitalia and a vulgar slang term for the vulva.[49] "Gash," an abjection (a wound), emerged in the 16th century, may have come from a story involving the Devil: an angel was forming women and forgot to cut off their "parts of generation." Lucifer

> took it upon himself to set matters straight ... he placed himself in a sawpit with a scythe fixed to a stick in his hand and directed the women to straddle the pit. He then gave each the *mark of the beast* (c. 1715) ... Tall women received only a moderate scratch, but little women ... received a somewhat larger cut ... they both went home with an *everlasting wound* (17thC), known in some quarters as the *divine scar* (18thC). The Devil, henceforth, was to known as 'Old Nick' or 'Old Scratch;' and the *cunt*, as *slit* (17th – 20thC), *nick*, and *gash* (both 16th – 20thC).[50]

Such words, associated with the Devil (and thus evil), "are hateful and sexualize women's genitalia from the point of view of a heterosexual male."[51]

Other abjections, such as "dirt box," "dirty barrel" (dirtiness), "meat seat," "butcher shop" (uncooked meat), "the snail trail," "dripping delta" (secretions), "stench trench" (smell), and "gaping axe wound" (wound) all refer to women's genitals, and women in general, as disgusting. Often, such words, especially wounds, were referred to in relation to a violent act: "black cat with its throat cut" and "sliced stomach."[52] "These terms construct women's genitalia (and women) as dirty and smelly, as leaky and uncontained. Abjection corresponds ... to the revolting effluvia theory ... that female genitalia are derogated

because of their secretions and close association with excretion and urination."[53]

The female genitals are also described as dangerous, as places from which things do not return ("the Bermuda Triangle"), places things are sucked into ("the black hole"), hidden hazards ("squirrel trap"), and dangerous creatures ("hairy growler").[54] All of these terms deal with the danger of entering, as if the vagina would capture the penis, attack it, and never let it go. The transformation of the female genitals being thought of as crafty or cunning through the use of "quaint" to being seen as dangerous and frightening can be clearly seen. Women are considered to be scheming, plotting, and as a result, dangerous. This is implicated with other slang terms, such as "carnal trap," "meat grinder," "mouse trap," and "snapper."[55]

DEROGATORY MALE GENITALIA TERMS

The word "prick" a common word until it turned into a vulgarity around the year 1700, is an insult used to describe an offensive male. Yet, it is nowhere near as offensive to males as the popular word "cunt" is to females: "Calling someone a *prick* is a commonplace insult, but we reserve use of the expression for males of a particular character, and not for men in general."[56] The Yiddish "putz" is a stronger term for "prick," but its more a term for the individual than the male genitals: "When you call someone a *putz,* you're telling him that he's a real *prick*."[57] In terms of abjections, none of the male genital terms compiled by Braun and Kitzinger referred to wounds or dirtiness, only secretions, which were not considered negative. "MGTs [male genital terms] referring to secretions appeared "comical" (e.g., variations of custard chucker, one-eyed yoghurt thrower).[58] Other such terms include: "bald-headed spunk-juice dispenser," "cream cannon," and "the jizz syringe."[59]

Male genitals are also referred to as dangerous, but not in the same way in which those of women are. Male genital "danger" is an active, attacking type of danger. War imagery and weapons are common in this category – "stabbing truncheon," "sword," "spoo gun," "heat seeking missile," "torpedo," "womb raider," "love pistol," "meat spear," "stealth

bomber," "battering ram" and "purple-helmeted love warrior."[60,61,62] These weapon terms, paired with the wound abjections that refer to female genitalia, a large about of violence is implied: "we have a scenario where women's genitalia are wounds, and male genitalia inflict wounds."[63]

PRODUCERS AND DISCUSSION

Derogatory terms and abjections for female genitals are much more frequently produced by men than women, although men produced more of such words for their own genitalia. As Braun and Kitzinger state, female genital terms "that convey disgust (abjection terms) are more likely to be produced by men. There were few MGTs [male genital terms], produced by either men or women, that conveyed disgust in the same way."[64] Those that were produced were more humorous than insulting in many cases, while those that referred to women were foul and degrading.

Male genitals were more likely to be referred to with a "danger" term, although as mentioned above, always in an active, attacking manner. Female genitalia are referred to more as mysterious, frightening areas. Men are more likely than women to produce such dangerous words for their own genitals, just as they were more likely to produce wound slang for female genitalia. It was suggested that men consider themselves to be explorers, seeing female genitalia as landscapes; the "danger" slang portrays the man as a warrior, delving into dangerous areas from which he may not return and inflicting wounds with his powerful weapons. This can have some frightening implications, for this language discusses the very parts of the human body that make a person male or female. In a heterosexual relationship, with one male and one female, this language has set up a (linguistic) situation in which the male is a violent attacker of the female in terms of sexual relations. With sexual organs and relations described by violence, it undoubtedly has effects on gendered relationships. Examination of domestic violence statistics proves that many women experience sexual violence and assaults while in a relationship; "researchers estimate that between 10% and 14% of married women experience rape in marriage."[65]

CONCLUSIONS

Human society is formed and maintained through language; it is used to define ourselves, others, and the world around us. Words are encoded with meanings that are themselves influenced by the society and culture in which they are used. The continual use of the meaning-laden words perpetuates the messages encoded in them, spreading the cultural statements they carry. Genitalia, the organs that separate males from females, are symbols of what is to be a man or a woman. They are highly sexualized, tied with the act of sex itself, and as an extension, relationships in general. Thus, conceptualization of genitalia through language reveals what western society views as male and female.

Encoded within female genital terms are stereotypes of women as passive, tame, submissive, and owned by men. Female genitalia are more frequently represented in a derogatory manner ("cunt," "gash,"), as something disgusting and abhorrent; these words are produced more by men, demonstrating a depreciation of the female genitalia. Men are also more likely to refer to a female's genitals as a container, something for the male to enter and to deposit his sperm in. Females are landscapes for men to explore and conquer, timid animals that are overshadowed and ravaged by wild beasts. Although there are positive genital slang words, many are decidedly negative. "The absence of arguably more positive categories in FGTs [female genital terms] compared to MGTs [male genital terms], like leisure or sporting equipment, for example, or musical instruments, suggest that women's genitalia can (still) only be conceptualized in certain ways."[66] Negative and degrading slang referring to women contrasted with the positive and even glorifying slang used for male genitalia parallel the gender inequality in western society.

Euphemistic slang ("down there," "star") creates an aura of mystery around the female genitals, not referring to any specific anatomical part. The same is seen with other terms such as "pussy" and "twat." Braun and Kitzinger asked their respondents to provide definitions for such words, and found that their answers varied greatly. Individuals defined

"pussy" as the vulva, vagina, pubic hair, clitoris, or the general female organ, and "twat" as the vulva, vagina, or hymen. Of the forty-nine slang terms they asked to be defined, the meanings of only two words were unanimously agreed upon.[67] They concluded that female genital slang does not have clear or consistent meanings, making it more difficult to discuss the organs. Male slang is clearer – even the euphemistic "extension" is a clear reference to the erect penis.

> The lack of precision, and the failure to name specific parts of the female genitalia in slang implies a corresponding lack of interest in, or attention to, the details of those genitalia, their functions and sensations. The absence of linguistic differentiation suggests an absence of conceptual differentiation: It invokes (hetero)sexual encounters predicated upon female genitalia as simply a hole to be filled.[68]

Degrading, belittling, and vague female genital slang terms and positive, venerating, and clear male slang terms linguistically assert male dominance and female submissiveness, male power and female powerlessness. "The prevalence of terms for women's genitalia that can be classified as derogatory or dismissive, or terms which are nonspecific and vague, continues, reflecting and perpetuating a cultural context in which women's genitalia [and women themselves] are either conceptually absent or perceived negatively."[69]

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Untitled (the bonfire)
SARAH FEIGENBAUM

DIGITAL PRINT

Jules Henri Poincaré
Versatile Mathematician

KATHRYN BELMONTE

Credited with the formation of the discipline of topology, Jules Henri Poincaré was an insightful mathematician who contributed to numerous fields of mathematics and physics. He worked in geometry, number theory, differential equations, and in particular, topology, a field that he pioneered. Poincaré's development of two models for hyperbolic geometry contributed to the understanding of celestial mechanics and his creation of topology clarified the relationships between functions and objects in space.

Born in 1854, Poincaré's mathematical genius was evident from an early age. He earned first place on the entrance exam to L'Ecole Polytechnique in 1873 and fifth place for L'Ecole Normale Supérieure, arguably the most prestigious school in France. His abilities in math were recognized when he won first prize in the Concours Général for elementary mathematics.[1] After a brief time working as a mining engineer, Poincaré became a professor at Normandy's University of Caen. While at Caen, he linked non-Euclidean geometry and Fuchsian functions, which are now called automorphic functions: "the transformations [...] used to define Fuchsian functions were identical to those of non-Euclidean geometry."[2]

Poincaré's work habits distinguish him from other mathematicians of the time. Because he preferred working alone to collaborating, Poincaré devoted little time to reading the publications of his contemporaries and predecessors. Thus, nearly all of his work is a result of his own

efforts and rarely draws on previously published findings. Poincaré also claimed that he made use of his subconscious to solve problems. He would often work on a problem for a short time, relying on his mind to finish the work while he slept. He once explained this ability:

> For fifteen days I struggled to prove that no functions analogous to those I have since called Fuchsian functions could exist; I was then very ignorant. Every day I sat down at my work table where I spent an hour or two; I tried a great number of combinations but arrived at no result. One evening, contrary to my custom, I took black coffee; I could not go to sleep; ideas swarmed up in clouds; I sensed them clashing until, to put it so, a pair would hook together to form a stable combination. By morning I had established the existence of a class of Fuchsian functions, those derived from the hypergeometric series. I had only to write up the results, which took me a few hours.[3]

It seems that Poincaré experienced a condition called extra-cognition in which people become aware of the unconscious processes of the brain.[4]

Poincaré's work benefited from his ability to work through problems subconsciously. The first interpretation of hyperbolic geometry was given by Beltrami and Klein. Following this work, Poincaré introduced two interpretations of hyperbolic geometry. Hyperbolic geometry assumes all the axioms of neutral geometry but uses a different parallel property, the hyperbolic axiom. This axiom states that there exist a line

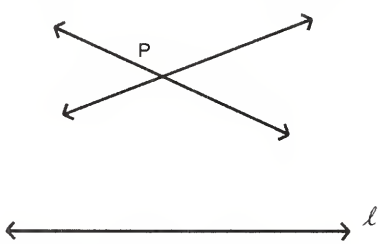
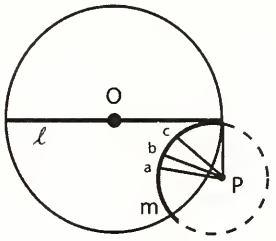


Figure 1

l and a point P such that there are at least two distinct lines that pass through P and are parallel to ℓ. (See Figure 1)

Poincaré's interpretations of hyperbolic geometry furthered understanding of automorphic functions, which are classes of functions that are invariant when fractional linear transformations are applied to them.[5] His disk interpretation calls points interior to a Euclidean circle the points of the model. Lines in the model are called P-lines (represented in bold in Figure 2) and are diameters of the circle or open arcs of circles orthogonal to the circle. Incidence is defined in the Euclidean sense. Betweenness also comes from Euclidean geometry, with the addition of the condition that for points A, B, and C lying on an arc of the circle centered at P, $A \star B \star C$ if $\overrightarrow{PB}$ is between $\overrightarrow{PA}$ and $\overrightarrow{PC}$.[6]

Figure 2



We will assume that this interpretation is a model that satisfies the axioms of incidence, betweenness, and congruence and we will demonstrate that this model satisfies the hyperbolic axiom. We will show that for all lines ℓ and every point P not on ℓ in the interior of circle O, there exist at least two lines through P parallel to ℓ. By the definition of parallel, two parallel lines do not intersect. In this model, there are an infinite numer of arcs through point P. For every arbitrarily chosen P, there are at least two lines through P that are parallel to ℓ (see Figures 3a-3b).

Figure 3a

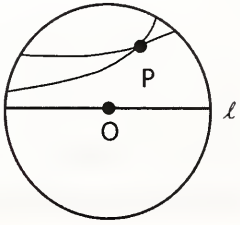
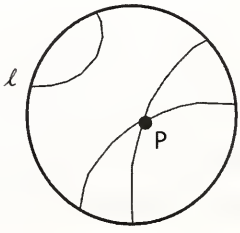


Figure 3b



The advantage of his models over the one proposed by Beltrami and Klein is that the angles in Poincaré's models are measured following Euclidean methods. By constructing tangent rays to the arcs, one can measure the angle formed by the models' lines. Figure 4 represents the tangent lines constructed when two circular arcs intersect at point A. The angle formed by these arcs is the number of degrees in the angle between the tangent rays. In Figure 5, one circular arc intersects an ordinary ray. The angle formed by the tangent line to the arc and the ordinary ray is the angle between the arc and the ordinary ray.[7]

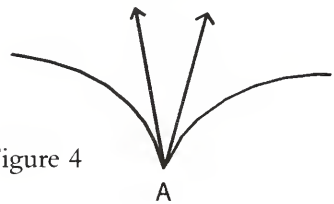


Figure 4

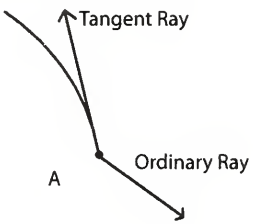


Figure 5

The disk model is frequently used to draw tessellations. In these designs, shapes are repeated from the center of a circle to the edge. Each shape keeps its proportions but the shapes decrease in size as they near the boundary of the circle. M.C. Escher's "Circle Limits," shown in Figure 6, is a well-known example of this application of Poincaré's hyperbolic model.[8]

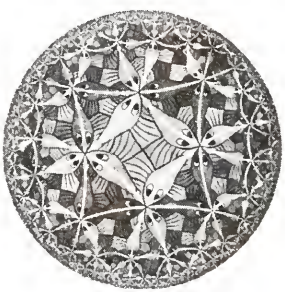


Figure 6

Poincaré's other interpretation of hyperbolic geometry, the upper-half plane model, represents points with points lying on one Euclidean half plane determined by a fixed line. Lines in this model are either rays emanating from and perpendicular to the line or semicircles in the half plane whose center lies on the line.[9] Incidence in this model follows

the same definition as in Euclidean geometry. To measure angles for congruence, tangent lines are drawn at the arcs and are measured in the Euclidean manner.

Figure 7

Aside from Poincaré's insights into hyperbolic geometry, he is well known for his creation of the field of topology. Topology studies the relation between objects in space. Two objects are said to be homeomorphic when they share the same topological properties: they can be deformed by stretching or shrinking until they are congruent.[10] Thus, the two shapes can be considered homeomorphic when one of the objects can be continuously deformed into the another.

Poincaré's development of topology came as a result of his graduate studies in differential equations. He conjectured that homeomorphic spaces could be deformed into their isomorphic counterparts. He defined topology and fundamental group. He gave us the term homotopy, which is a continuous transformation of one function into another. His work with topology was applied to physics and granted him status as a co-discoverer of the theory of special relativity with Albert Einstein.[11] Following Lie's work with continuous groups, Poincaré showed that geometry consists of Euclidean geometry, non-Euclidean geometry, and two other geometries with two distinct fixed points and a movable uniplanar figure.[12]

It is difficult to quantify Poincaré's contributions to the field of mathematics because he was a prolific mathematician that worked across the disciplines. However, his development of hyperbolic geometry models aided mathematical applications in the physical sciences and his formation of topology opened a new realm of mathematical thought in the 20th century. Much of the current research in mathematics today is based on principles of topology developed by Poincaré a century ago.

Notes

1. Ioan James, Remarkable Mathematicians: From Euler to von Neumann (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 239.
2. Ioan James, Remarkable Mathematicians: From Euler to von Neumann (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 240.
3. Ioan James, Remarkable Mathematicians: From Euler to von Neumann (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 240.
4. Ioan James, Remarkable Mathematicians: From Euler to von Neumann (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 240.
5. Roger Cooke, The History of Mathematics: A Brief Course New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc , 1997), 388.
6. Marvin Jay Greenberg, Euclidean and Non Euclidean Geometries: Development and History, 3rd ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1993), 232-233.
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Timing

Can she dance…
each ringing footfall sinks deep earth.
You're calling up seas, honey,
old seas.

You're calling back through time, darling,
history jig,
power ballad,
epic stretch, girl,
turn-key,
door-knob,

clock dance, minute legs.

Depth charge.

Fossil clique.

Flower hair,
smooth and calculated like orphaned coffee,
with ease transports raw materials through closed nations,
with poise returns industrial stocks to their balanced norms,
with a wry smile bends straight-backed at the waist,
and answers me with her face to the floor.

I hold you responsible
For every thunderclap
accompanying ozone-gritty breath
by ideal chance,

For the matriarchal pulse of tide
that spreads the sunset like a quilt
across the bay,

You, for this skittering full-body shiver event
as I try to fit the key into the lock
in an edgy winter month,
my breath billowing back cloud at me from the door,

the scratches around the keyhole a testament

to your staying power,

and the elasticity of your joints.

WILL BRUCE

Sunday
MICHELLE LYNN KELMARTIN

GELATIN SILVER PRINT

The "Black Art" of Jazz Music
As Seen Through the Eyes of Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston

CARRIE CHAPTER

"Listen to it closely
Ain't you heard
something underneath."
~ Langston Hughes, "Dream Boogie"

Beyond the politics of the New Negro movement soared the expression of the young Negro artist. For the first time, black artistry gained recognition and fame, excavating a cultural base long thought non-existent by the white population. However, similar to the struggle of the New Negro scholar, black artists faced the difficulty of defining themselves within the community. The question arose of what constituted "black art" in the midst of such creative outpouring. Several prominent writers of the time took up the task of defining black artistic expression in terms of environment, race, and an artist's responsibility to his/her work. One of the favorite topics of discussion was jazz. Newly birthed from the Blues genre, jazz stood as a prime and controversial recipient for the debate of black art. Both Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston contest the foundation and elements of Negro expression, with sharp attention to musicality in artistic forms. In the following jazz selections, there is evidence that what defines black art is at best varied. However, which writer fully justifies jazz as authentic black artistic expression? Through the essays of Hurston and Hughes, jazz music is given a dualistic quality as a work of art—that of timely entertainment, and that of embodiment of the black soul.

As a popular feature in black entertainment during the Harlem Renaissance, jazz recreates the nature of the movement through song—the promise, celebration, and energy of youthful ambition. Unlike the blues, it preaches good times, and out of such upbeat sentiment rises a flair for rowdy improvisation and uninhibited passion. Jazz is also spiritualistic in its zealous praise of the urban social life. The very structure of the music is organic; its syncopated rhythms stomp like a thumping heartbeat or native drum, and the call-response pattern connects audience with performer, as well as performer with instruments. The notion of signifying, which is to say the stressing of communication, complements the call-response. Repetition, in either lyric or chord, is another technique that works like a revolutionary chant or persisting echo. The strength of jazz has its origins in the instruments. It becomes a rare musical form, in which the human voice conforms to the rhythm of the instruments, thereby becoming a musical mimic of instrumental sounds. The band, likewise, will at times envelop a beat that distinctly plays out like a human voice. It is this integration, the indiscriminate blend of sound and body, that strongly relates the African-American experience with its music.

In one jazz selection, Louis Armstrong's jazzy rendition of "St. Louis Blues," there is curious co-existence of hardship and jubilance.[1] Armstrong, although singing intermittently, allows his trumpet to set the whimsical mood; it whines with heart-ache in humanistic moans. When he does sing, he quickly trades his own language in for a wail that the horn would produce. The band, meanwhile, flutters behind the supremacy of the horn, in samba-like repetition, marching around the melody. There is also a call-response moment in which the trumpet, like a preacher-man, beckons his congregational band, to which the instruments resonate and reply. In Langston Hughes's "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," he speaks of how the characteristics of jazz influence his own works.[2] For him, jazz is much more than a trend; it is a deep reflection of black progress and emotion. Hughes sees it as a form of salvation, a medium through which a people can be unified: "Let the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice

of Bessie Smith singing blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand."[3] In the case, of the "St. Louis Blues," Hughes acknowledges the importance of the human-instrument merging into one being. In jazz, there is no division of feeling; a horn will embody the intensity of a man just as easily as the conveyance of the human soul: "The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs."[4] So, in Hughes's essay, is he suggesting that jazz, above all other works, transcends the notion of black art? He seems to note that its transcendence stems from its cultural relevance.

Hurston's approach to defining a Negro art form is more linear and strictly outlined than that of Hughes. Instead of looking at race identity through black art, she inverts it—black art through race identity. Hurston sets up categories of qualifications in what identifies art as exclusively black in expression.[5] "St.Louis Blues" is even cited under the category of asymmetry. Concerning jazz, she talks of "the abrupt and unexpected changes," and that "the frequent change of key and time are evidences of this quality in music (note to St. Louis Blues)."[6] She goes on to explain what makes jazz asymmetrical, in her estimation: "There is a rhythm, but it is the rhythm of segments. Each unit has a rhythm of its own, but when the whole is assembled it is lacking in symmetry. But easily workable to a Negro who is accustomed to the break in going from one part to another, so that he adjusts himself to a new tempo."[7] So, in a sense, where Hughes is seeing the grand fusion of the artist and his work in jazz music, Hurston observes jazz as a feat in adaptability for the Negro artist. There is no unifying force; instead, there is blatant fragmentation between the artist and the attempt to wholly present his work.

Another jazz sample, a descendant of the traditional form, is Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald's "Honey Suckle Rose."[8] The song revels in the passion between two lovers; Fitzgerald belts out a lusty tune that finds its provocation in the soft strum of cellos and rambling drum beats. The horns, in this case, punctuate the highs and lows of the piece. Also, the song relies heavily on singer-instrument interaction; after Fitzgerald sings a few notes, the instruments dutifully repeat, and vice versa. Once

again, the harmony between band and singer is integral to the world of the song; the call-response indicates this cohesion as a single note replies to Fitzgerald "beep-bee" do-wee" sounds. As if to accommodate an old friend, Fitzgerald, like Armstrong, slips into instrument mimicry. This creates a harmonious balance in the song; there is a group effort to convey a rollicking beat—every person and thing participates.

One aspect of black art that Hughes believes in is that it is up to the common people to be perceptive to the fruits of their culture. The subject of "Honey Suckle Rose" is universally understood and enjoyed; people love and lust with images appealing to the senses. This is the kind of song that common people, not the Intelligentsia, would take as their own, as a reflection of how they feel and react. Hughes says of the common man: "Play awhile. Sing awhile. O, let's dance! These common people are not afraid of spirituals, as for a long time their more intellectual brethren were, and jazz is their child."[9] The fearlessness and willingness to experiment found in jazz is what makes it one of the most accessible art forms during the Harlem Renaissance.

According to Hurston's guidelines, "Honey Suckle Rose" compiles several facets of black artistic expression. First, it certainly falls into the concept of the Absence of Privacy; jazz has the tendency to split the moral fiber at the seams for the sake of a decadent tune. Therefore, discretion is ill-advised. Hurston asserts that "love -making is a biological necessity the world over and an art among Negroes" and that "songs are built on the power to charm beneath the bed-clothes."[10] So, this is to say that the intention to seduce is as artistic as a song celebrating it. With this clash of poetic imagery and sexual suggestion, it can be said that "both poetry and jazz-in-lyrics are arts of indirection, often extremely ironic constructs, both sad and funny at the same time."[11] In regard to these works of art, Hurston continues: "Here again we have individuals striving to excel in what the community considers an art."[12] She seems to juxtapose practiced passion with the struggle of the New Negro artist—two expressions like in their popularity and desire to succeed. "Honey Suckle Rose" also represents Hurston's idea of Drama as an irrefutable characteristic of Negro expression. The descriptive

quality of the song, its reliance on imagery, turns a profession of love into abstract poetry. As Hurston says, with regard to the nature of the New Negro: "His interpretation of the English language is in terms of pictures. Everything illustrated. So we can say the white man thinks in written language and the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics."[13] She goes on to describe how every instance of black life is "highly dramatised"; so, in the case of "Honey Suckle Rose," the simplicity of a love affair is actually an artistic performance—there is a sense of event in the ordinary.

Other jazz selections examine the purely instrumental aspects of the genre, and what the purity of an art form denotes in terms of "black art." Jelly Roll Morton's "Boogie Woogie Blues" and "Black Bottom Stomp" were popular dance-hall ditties in the 1920s.[14] Unlike the other aforementioned jazz pieces, "Boogie Woogie Blues" includes the technique of stride piano, which would become elemental as a hallmark of jazz rhythms. The piano takes the place of a human soloist, offering a quick tempo in which the instrument sounds like it is both singing and dancing. Behind the piano, the cello and drums play in a lower octave, lazily dogging the piano in a musical chase. The song's nondescript movement is indicative of the improvisational feel of jazz; this is especially notable as the song trails off in a series of drum beats. The primacy of the piano is important because it continues the jazz trend of allowing a single instrument carry a song, with all the authority of a human voice. "Black Bottom Stomp" has hints of ragtime in its roots. A common dance tune, it relies on horns to carry the melody; trumpets, trombones, and clarinets create the levels in the song, highs and lows, in a call-response pattern among the instruments. Most interestingly, though, the song breaks its focus by giving a solo to a series of banjos and cellos.

It is this division of focus, as well as the suggestion of the title, that shows the growth of the African-American persona; it groups together old Southern simplicity and the radiant, new urban jazz. This recalls Hughes's claim that "Negroes" have an "inexhaustible supply of themes at hand," and that "to these the Negro artist can give his racial

individuality, his heritage of rhythm and warmth, and his incongruous humor that so often, as in the blues, becomes ironic laughter mixed with tears."[15] Through jazz, the New Negro can attempt to define himself in touchstones from his past, and the possibilities of his present. Jazz as a means of solid representation of the times cannot be underestimated. There is defiance in the art form, something out to reflect a collective mood: "the depth of tradition, reaching back in an unbroken continuum to the beginning of the century, belies attempts to portray African-Americans as people without a past—hence the appeal of an unambiguous and convincing historical narrative. If the achievements that jazz represents are to be impressed on present and future generations, the story must be told, and told well."[16] In this case, an artist's responsibility as a jazz musician not only transcends "black art," but also the boundaries of generation. Also, in "Boogie Woogie Blues," with its redundant drum at the end, evokes Hughes as well. Hughes maintains that "jazz [to him] is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America; the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul...."[17] The primitive "tom-tom" resonates within the Harlem Renaissance jazz drum; its artistic worth is almost overshadowed by its cultural contribution in Hughes's view. And, "Boogie Woogie Blues" indicates "the blues" in its title, but, like "St. Louis Blues," it is presented as a jazzed-up, dance number, which is reminiscent Hughes again—"the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile."[18]

However, "Black Bottom Stomp" and "Boogie Woogie Blues" fit into the artistic landscape in a different way, according to Hurston's perspective. Both songs can be categorized as "the Jook" in Hurston's essay. As she describes, "musically speaking, the Jook is the most important place in America. For in its smelly, shoddy confines has been born the secular music known as the blues, and on the blues has been founded jazz."[19] These "pleasure-houses" would have prominently featured dance favorites like "Boogie Woogie Blues" and "Black Bottom Stomp." Hurston insists that "jooking" is "singing and playing in the true Negro style"; if this is true, then Jelly Roll Morton's compositions are the epitome of "black art."[20] In conjunction with the Jook, the songs also

satisfy Hurston's requirement of Dancing as an ever-present component in "black art." The music fully invites, and is often associated with, one or many types of dance. Hurston affirms that "Negro dancing is dynamic suggestion. No matter how violent it may appear to the beholder, every posture gives the impression that the dancer will do much more."[21] The tempo and raucous style of the music anticipates this point; in fact, the rhythm coaxes it into certain fruition. The songs also belong to the characteristic of Originality. Hurston explains this notion by saying that "what we really mean by Originality is the modification of ideas. While he lives and moves in the midst of a white civilization, everything that he touches is re-interpreted for his own use."[22] In the case of "Boogie Woogie Blues," there is the example of the stride piano. Although a classic instrument, Morton renovates its entire function; its very sound is no longer recognizable and elemental, but rather inventive and otherworldly. It is the theme of interpretation that turns jazz into an exclusive art form. Through renegade improvisation and personified instruments, jazz as a genre completes various definitions of "black art" during the Harlem Renaissance.

One scholar is noted in saying that "jazz was a performer's art; culture a composer's art."[23] However, is an artistic separation between jazz and culture necessary, or rather even evident ? It would appear that the opposite is true, that jazz music is responsible for shaping culture, and vice versa. The quotation also delineates how jazz is construed in terms being true "black art." Is the art of the New Negro so specified, or can it, as Hughes would suggest, satisfy a variety of themes in the black lifestyle? The latter can be supported by the diversity found within the jazz genre; there are those songs that carry particular cultural significance, some that reflect the "drama" of the everyday black person, and some that thrive on entertainment value. If the spectrum of "black art" is that wide, what of Hurston's attempt at categorization? In the case of jazz music, it is more of a convenience than truth.

While jazz is surely a legitimate form of Negro expression, it did not need, nor did it fit, every guideline that Hurston posed in her essay. The desire to qualify, to be nicely labeled and accepted, would also be

antithetical to the purpose of jazz music, which is to speak for itself and define its worth on its own varying terms. Then, it could be said that "the essence of jazz, in other words, lies not in any one style, or any one cultural or historical context, but in that which links all these things together into a seamless continuum."[24] So, as it continues to be to this very day, jazz arches into a bridge; in its constant re-invention and cultural extensions, jazz music connects its "black art" to that of universal art.

Notes

1. Louis Armstrong, "St.Louis Blues," *Louis Armstrong 16 Most Requested Songs*, Louis Armstrong, Sony compact disc.

2. Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and Racial Mountain," in Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology, ed. Venetria K. Patton and Maureen Honey (New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 2001), 40-44.

3. Hughes, 44.

4. Hughes, 44.

5. Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology, ed. Venetria K. Patton and Maureen Honey (New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 2001), 61-73.

6. Hurston, 65.

7. Hurston, 65.

8. "Honey Suckle Rose," Ella and Duke at the Cote D'azur, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald, Polygram compact disc.

9. Hughes, 41.

10. Hurston, 68.

11. Barry Wallenstein. "Poetry and Jazz: A Twentieth-Century Wedding," *Black American Literature Forum* 25, no.3 (1991): 595-620, http://www.jstor.org/ (accessed Oct.13, 2005). 595.

12. Hurston, 68.

13. Hurston, 61-62.

14. "Boogie Woogie Blues," "Black Bottom Stomp," Jelly Roll Morton:1926-1930, Jelly Roll Morton, Jsp compact disc.

15. Hughes, 41

16. Scott DeVeaux. "Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography," *Black American Literature Forum* 25, no. 3 (1991): 525-560, http://www.jstor.org/ (Accessed Oct. 13, 2005). 527.

17. Hughes, 43.

18. Hughes, 43.

19. Hurston, 69.

20. Hurston, 69-70.

21. Hurston, 65.

22. Hurston, 67.

23. Lawrence W. Levine. "Jazz and American Culture," *The Journal of American Folklore* 102, no. 403 (1991):6-22, http://www.jstor.org/ (Accessed on Oct. 13, 2005). 8.

24. DeVeaux, 530.

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A Word from the Publisher

THE AUTHOR IS NOT DEAD

I'm dating myself when I say that I went to school at a time when semiotics was the language of choice for bookworm undergraduates and proclaiming "The Death of the Author" was as fashionable as spending a night in an ersatz shantytown on the academic quad to protest apartheid in South Africa. My favorite professor – a brilliant British art historian lured to my concrete Alma Mater by a six-figure salary and a regiment of TAs while he awaited the call from Harvard – taught an introduction to Critical Theory each semester to a lecture hall packed with art students, English majors, playwrights, poets, and the odd mushroom-gathering fraternity brother. We learned about "privilege" and "texts" and structural linguistics; we puzzled over Lacanian theory and learned to say "Roland Barthes" with the proper whisper at the end. We took notes slavishly, with a hopeful thoroughness, and castigated ourselves after class was over and we hurried – word-addled – through the cold to the colder student center (designed by I.M Pei) for letting our high-school French lapse. If only we could read Honoré de Balzac's story "Sarrasine" in the original langue, we thought, this business about signs and signifiers might make some sense! If only our campus wasn't so conventional – our classmates studied engineering, business administration, optics – we could topple the old order of ideas, reform the literary canon, and throw parties where people drank wine from real glasses instead of sucking Genesee Cream Ale straight from the tap! The author was dead, after all, and a new era was upon us – all of our professors were lecturing about Foucault's "panopticon" and assigning books, often "marginalized," that reflected the author's "culture" rather than being "great works of art." (Every terminology came in scare quotes then, although the real tools of the deconstructionist's trade were slashes – as in Barthes's S/Z – and hyphens.) This is a long preamble to a very brief note about a magazine produced by the faculty and administration of a

small college to celebrate its student writers and artists, but it's important to acknowledge, I think, that the notion of the author has survived its death watch – particularly at Washington College – even if Wikipedia, with its 60,000 nameless experts, has proved Roland Barthes to be at least partially right.

Please take the time to consider the work assembled here, with great care, in an attractive, tidy package that – last time I checked – was given unto to the world free of charge. The contributors to this issue of The Washington College Review are authors – all of them. They have shared something with us that they thought we might like and now the time has come for them to get it back, typeset, printed and bound. Published. And if that isn't reason enough to celebrate, here's another: there are even more where they came from.

Benjamin Anastas
Marfa, Texas
September 6, 2006

Contributors

KATHRYN BELMONTE, class of 2007, is a math and French major from Bel Air, Maryland. Her essay on Poincaré was originally written for Dr. McLendon's "Foundations of Geometry" course and is her second piece to be published in the *Review*.

CINDY BROWN wanted to go on tour with Bruce Dickenson after graduating in 2006. She grew up in Ellicott City, MD listening to Iron Maiden during the late 80's/early 90s and figured, "Why not live a dream?" Alas, Bruce had no need for a groupie on his tour and even less need for someone who can't carry 80-pound pieces of staging back and forth across an arena, night after night. All of her girlhood fantasies crushed, Cindy took her degree in English and pursued a job in technical writing. Her days are spent 9-5 gazing at the cubicle wall wondering, "If I spend more time at the gym. If I grow stronger. Maybe, just maybe Bruce will take me on tour." Cindy knows next to nothing about technology, but knows a lot about how to keep plants alive. None of this has anything to do with her poetry.

WILL BRUCE was born outside of Philadelphia into the family of a jazz pianist/chemist and a classical guitarist/family therapist on August 11th, 1987. He started writing in first grade, filling up an entire journal by writing one letter on each page (I W E N T T O T H E Z O O ! ! !). Things haven't changed that much since. He came to Washington College in 2005 after writing for his school newspaper and writers' union, and promptly set about writing for the school magazine and joined the writer's union. He will serve as a features editor for the *Collegian* in the 2006/2007 school year. Will enjoys cheap funk LPs, the woods, the woods at night, open fields, fires, friends, train stations, breezes, street lights, snow, and tea when it's raining.

JOSHUA BURKHART is planning to graduate in spring of '08 as an art major with a minor in computer science. He is undecided upon what he would like to do after college.

CARRIE CHAPTER graduated in 2006 with a major in English and a minor in drama. She is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society and Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society. She plans to attend graduate school for dramaturgy and dramatic criticism in the fall of 2006.

BRIAN CORNELIUS graduated from Washington College in 2006 as a drama major and creative writing minor. He is living in New York, and is slowly trying to make his way up the ladder towards a career in theatre and film.

LIAM DALEY is an English and drama double major, class of 2007. He is the author of three full-length plays and numerous short essays. Thus far, academically, he has devoted particular attention to medieval romance (as demonstrated by his contribution to this *Review*) as well as comic drama of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The former genre will be the focus of his thesis, when it eventually comes to be written. For the past two terms he has been studying abroad at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He is still not entirely certain what to think of the place. This is his second work published by the *Washington College Review*.

HEATHER ANN HOLIDAY graduated from Washington College in 2006 with a BA in art and drama. Her piece in the *Review* is from her "Kansas Series." The series, named with *The Wizard of Oz* in mind, examines such themes as self, growth and identity. Heather currently resides in Chestertown and is eager to begin the next phase of life after college.

MICHELLE KELMARTIN's black and white surreal photograph was influenced by such great artists as Jerry Uelsmann—a master at manipulating photographs and creating beautiful scenes that couldn't possibly be real, but are nonetheless enthralling for their content alone.

This photograph is a simple combination of two different photographs that she took with a digital camera and layered together through the aid of a computer. When she was making her portfolio, which included this photo, she sought to combine two things; an empty, seemingly never ending road—along with a scene that was simple, yet had a strong sense of natural light and profound shadows. While the two combined photos were originally shot in color, she chose to convert the images to black and white, so that they would be simplistic and less confusing. Finally, she wanted a title for the photograph that reflected what was being seen, so she chose "Sunday." This seemed to be the perfect fit because there are two different scenes that can be seen in the photograph; one of a vast open road and the other a sunlit curtain. The road made her think of a traditional "Sunday drive," while the curtain hinted at a "lazy Sunday afternoon."

AIMÉE KIDD is a Washington College senior who grew up in Westminster, Maryland. She is an art major, creative writing minor, and is also pursuing certification in secondary education. Because her father is profoundly deaf and her mother is slightly deaf, she started signing as well as articulating speech as a toddler. Thinking that signing hampered language development, one of her teachers suggested she stop using it to the consternation of the family. In spite of that myth, Aimée has overcome the abysmal concerns and uses both skills well today. Her photographs depict "artist, daughter" in a flurry of letters (manual alphabet) and images of the mouth as a receptor of formed words to be lip-read. Her creative work is meant to show there is a visual preference of either signing or lip-reading by hard-of-hearing and deaf individuals. The flurry of fingers can be visually matched letter for letter to parlay them into understandable words.

SARAH MCCLOSKEY ('06) graduated with a double major in anthropology and sociology this past May. She entered the world of work in July after looking forward to the move immensely. Sarah is surprised and delighted that her piece was chosen to be included in the *Review*. It was written as a paper for Dr. Erin Anderson's Sociology of the Body class, which she enjoyed greatly. She hopes that readers can get past any initial reservations they may have and consider the

message in this work. Sarah would like to thank Dr. Anderson for all of her support over the years, and for believing she could get this past the *Review* board.

ERIN O'HARE ('09) knows that Chestertown is not Boston. So does her poetry. Big, big plans have filled her mind since she was five years old. She's working on them.

CINDY ORNDORF graduated in 2006 with a double major in drama and English. A native of North East, MD, Cindy intends to pursue a career in the technical side of theater. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support these past four years.

ALEXIS PAZA is a 2006 graduate who majored in clinical counseling psychology and sociology. Her paper, "Average? Hardly the Norm!" was written for Dr. Erin Anderson's fascinating course, "Sociology of the Body." Lexi would like to thank her family for encouraging her to be anything but average, and her hometown, Williamsport, Maryland, for making her want so much more than small-town ideals. She is currently climbing the non-profit ladder before continuing on to a master's program in social work or community development.

CELESTE STANLEY was born and raised in Clinton, Maryland. She graduated in 2006 with a B.A. in business management with a minor in creative writing. Celeste has been writing poetry for roughly twelve years, and she would like to pursue publishing a book of poetry sometime in the near future.

AFTON L. WOODWARD graduated in 2006 and has 14 letters in her name, the same number of lines as in a sonnet. This is probably not a coincidence. Her essay was written for and inspired by Professor Olsen, to whom she owes much of her success at WC. Afton finally escaped her Midwestern hometown after graduating and moved to Washington, D.C., where she hopes to form a rock band and write songs about grammar. She will be working for the *Washington Examiner* and interning at National Public Radio to pay the bills in the meantime.

Colophon

This issue of the *Washington College Review* was designed and produced using Adobe InDesign CS2 and Photoshop CS2 software on Macintosh computers. The cover is set in Trixie, text and heads are set in Bembo with special characters in Bickham Ornaments.

Book design by Lindsay Bergman '07.

Cover art by Brian Cornelius '06.

Printed and bound by Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group.

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